Under the Great Seal

Joseph Hatton

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UNDER THE GREAT SEAL

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BY

JOSEPH HATTON

AUTHOR OF "CLYTIE," "CRUEL LONDON," "QUEEN OF BOHEMIA," "THREE RECRUITS," "THE GREAT WORLD," "MY ENEMY'S DAUGHTER," "BY ORDER OF THE CZAR," ETC.

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UNDER THE GREAT SEAL

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE BELLE OF HEART'S DELIGHT.

As the stony wilderness of some barren strand is unexpectedly decorated with a flower, so did Hannah Plympton dawn upon the uncouth community of Heart's Delight. A blush rose from the stock of a Devonshire garden, she adorned the waste of a Newfoundland settlement in the youngest days of the oldest British Colony.

Newfoundland had secret ties for some of the early settlers. Alan Keith was held there by his love for Hannah Plympton. That was his secret. Season after season, when he should have gone home with the fishing fleet, he lingered on the shores of Heart's Delight. Father, friends, home, religion, all were sacrificed to Hannah Plympton, and yet he had made no confession of his love. Hannah was not only the belle of Heart's Delight, she was its good angel, and, while ambitious to win her for his wife, Alan could only regard his desire as rash and presumptuous. It should be the reward of some gallant cavalier, or mighty sea captain who had fought a great battle, to gather the blush rose of Heart's Delight. And if such a hero had appeared Alan would have liked nothing better than to wager his life against him for the prize.

Furthermore, Hannah had come to be regarded as the daughter of the little community. She had a father who was looked upon as the founder and master of the settlement, but she was everybody's friend and neighbor. Her mother had died when Hannah was an infant. David Plympton, her father, had brought her from St. John's to the smaller settlement in the first days of her girlhood. He had inherited certain territorial rights in the natural harbor of Heart's Delight. The people had gathered round him, and the girl had grown up with the colony. She was an example of the heredity of English beauty, and a type of its nobility. The men of Heart's Delight felt the better for her ingenuous smile. The women were proud of her beauty. It made the men shy. They revered it; all of them except one. He was the shadow on her life, and she knew it not.

To dwell upon the beauty of Hannah is not necessarily to discount the comeliness of the other women of the colony. They had come from all parts of the old country, companions of adventurous men. Some of them were ill-favored, others brought pleasant faces, and all of them courageous hearts to the planting of the young colony. Hannah Plympton's manners were just as frank and free as theirs. There were no society airs at Heart's Delight, no assertion of caste, no assumption of superiority; all were equal in the unwritten laws of the place, except in so far as a masterful individuality marked this man, or a natural grace this woman, and these are factors of influence in all communities, whatever the dispensation under which they live. Hannah and her father held the foremost rank, not alone by reason of acknowledged rights—the father's property and the daughter's beauty; they were born with less limitations, physical and intellectual, than their neighbors, and the community unconsciously recognized the fact.

The superiority of Hannah was conceded without any

assumption of it on her part. She lived the life of the other women. She did not shrink from physical labor. She did her share of domestic work. She helped to bake and brew, and took a hand at braiding nets. Yet her hands were white and her complexion, not counting a freckle here and there, bore the heat and brunt of the day without losing its freshness and a certain delicacy of tint that is supposed to belong, almost exclusively, to ladies of the highest rank. There are women who never lose the distinctive beauty of a rich and fair complexion, give them the labor of the kitchen, the factory, or the field; just as the rose will blossom fresh and fair and sweet in the humblest environment.

The Plymptons hailed from Devonshire. Alan Keith came from Perth. David was the oldest colonist, Alan the youngest. Alan was a bright, clever fellow, of fine build, with long swinging arms, and great powerful hands. Awkward perhaps, as tall, strong men often are, but wonderfully handy; a famous sailor, with a big genial laugh; tender-hearted, but hot in temper; bared his throat to the weather even in winter; wore long, heavy boots, a rough jerkin and belt, with a slouch hat, and a blue neckerchief that had long, flying ends, like the streamers of a ship. David Plympton was the master of the village. The settlement needed a guiding hand; David's was the strongest. It wielded an unquestioned authority. He had no official power, none in the least. They were a free and independent community when the Fishing Admirals had sailed away after every year's harvest of the sea; too free, too independent, for then every man was as good as another. They had no covenant, no police, and no laws for police to enforce. England knew them not out of the fishing season, and so it came to pass that David Plympton ruled in Heart's Delight.

Brood in secret as he might over a love too deep for

words, Hannah knew of it. Trust a woman, however unsophisticated, to discover the passion of the most secretive and constrained of lovers. But Hannah did not know that this was a case of love at first sight; that Alan on his first trip to Newfoundland, three years previously, had bribed his captain to leave him at the fisheries, and all for love of her. Alan was no ordinary fisherman. He had prospects and expectations in Perth. He could have been a master himself, if he had chosen to go home. He had been well trained so far as the sea was concerned. A clever mariner, he was also a keen and successful fisherman. Hannah delighted to hear Alan talk with his pleasant Scotch accent, and he was fascinated with her soft, sweet voice. Both Plympton and his daughter spoke with something of the dialect of Drake and Frobisher; and Plympton gloried in this reminiscence of his native county.

Alan had built himself a hut not far from the Great House where Plympton lived, and he would sit on summer nights smoking and watching Hannah's window until the light went out, dreaming all kinds of schemes for approaching what always seemed to him the impossibility upon which his heart was set. On her side Hannah encouraged the praises showered upon Alan by Sally Mumford, her one single domestic, who with Patrick Doolan shared with her the duties and responsibilities of the Great House—the fishing stage, and the fish flakes, not to mention the garden patch that belonged to the Plympton domain.

It was in the days of the third George of England when the personal history of our story begins. They were turbulent times. Indeed the times had been turbulent for many a long year. Looking back with the guide of a systematized history, England seemed to be doing little else than fight and make peace, and fight and make peace again. Treaties of amity and declarations of war followed at intervals in regular succession. Our foes only made peace

when they could fight no longer; to break their treaties as soon as they had made fresh alliances and deemed themselves strong once more, or the English sufficiently weak for attack.

So far the history of the past; so far the history of the time when Alan Keith pondered over his daring venture of proposing to Master Plympton for the hand of his daughter Hannah.

The scene was the little fishing village of Heart's Delight, not many miles from St. John's, Newfoundland, with its rough stages and fish flakes for drying cod and its few scattered homes and bits of garden.

At one time this seed of a colony had promised to flourish. It was almost the first settlement that had been permitted to exist under the rights and privileges granted to the first pioneer; but in the days of David Plympton, Newfoundland was subject to a systematic persecution, which, in the light of the present time, seems as strange and unnatural as it was short-sighted and cruel.

When the first pioneer, Sir David Kirke, was restored to the rights given and taken back and finally re-endowed by Cromwell, the entire island of Newfoundland contained a population of three hundred and fifty families, or about two thousand inhabitants, scattered in fifteen small settlements, one of which Plympton's father, an original settler, had called Heart's Delight. They were the resident community.

Besides these, there was a floating population of several thousands, who arrived in summer to fish, and left with the autumn. Hundreds of vessels from England, and many from France, anchored at the fisheries and salted their takes ashore. As far as the English were concerned, the fisheries were carried on by merchants and shipowners and traders from the West of England. They were hostile to the settlers, regarding them as interlopers. They claimed the harbors and coves for the use of their servants while engaged

in curing fish. So great did their influence become that they induced the home government to make repressive laws, by which the act of planting became illegal, and the island was administered periodically as a training ground for the navy.

Settlement of any kind was prohibited within six miles of the shore, and this was intended to apply to the existing residents, any others being forbidden to proceed to the country for the purposes of colonization. All fishermen were commanded at the close of each season to return to England. Masters of vessels were bound in money fines of a serious amount to carry back to the old country such persons as they took out, and all plantations in Newfoundland were rigorously discouraged.

A hundred years ago the governor for the time being sharply rebuked a sheriff for having, during his absence, permitted a resident to erect a fence; ordered certain sheds or huts, erected as shelters, to be removed; and prohibited the erection of chimneys to other huts, or even the lighting of fires therein under any pretense whatever. It was enacted that the master of the first ship arriving at the fisheries from England should be admiral in the harbor where he cast anchor, the masters of the second and third to be vice admiral and rear admiral. The first had the privilege of reserving as much of the beach as he required for his own use. These men, servants of the capitalists, or owners of ships themselves, had a direct interest in questions of property and other social and political matters that came before them in their magisterial capacities. They dispensed what they called justice on the decks of their vessels. Disputes, arising between the inhabitants and the migratory fishing folks, were adjudicated by the fishing admirals. In the eyes of these judges the highest offense a man could be guilty of was the cultivation of the soil or the building of a house. They took, without hesitation, such buildings for their own use or destroyed them, and com-

mitted all kinds of excesses against the person as well as against property.

In the autumn they sailed away with all their crews and servants, leaving the settlements without even a semblance of law or order; some of them in a state of anarchy and a prey to lawless adventurers, others, however, blessed with good strong men capable of leading their fellows and maintaining order. Of such were Alan Keith and Master David Plympton of Heart's Delight; Keith, a young Scotch mariner and fisherman; Plympton, one of the few who had been secured in his rights through his father from Sir David Kirke, to whom Newfoundland was a royal grant for services to his country on land and sea. But such had been the excesses of the Fishing Admirals, and such the neglect of the high authorities at home, that Plympton began to fear for his inheritance, and to think of leaving the island with such possessions as he could carry, in bonds and notes and receipts for bank deposits in England.

Moreover, Newfoundland, besides the disabilities which she suffered by reason of the Fishing Admirals, had latterly more than usually labored under the disadvantages of her position as a more or less unprotected settlement, lying at the mercy of French cruisers and American privateers. Troubles with America had stopped the Newfoundland supplies from New England; and there was no knowing what would be the result of the latest conflict. Plympton was pessimistic in his views. This arose chiefly out of anxiety for his daughter, who, in an uncomfortable way, and to her sorrow, had been subjected to the rough admiration of such unexpected and powerful visitors as occasionally put into Heart's Delight—only recently a daring company of officers and men from a Salem warship, and on another occasion the master of an armed Frenchman, more like a pirate than a legitimate vessel of war.

It did not always happen that there were English cruisers off Newfoundland to protect the inhabitants, and, indeed,

so bitterly opposed were the government to the settlement, except for the uses of the fishery and the training of sailors for the fleet, that it is probable that Heart's Delight was hardly known to the English cruisers, or if it was, they would have no special instructions as to the insignificant interests of such a lawless plantation.

Watching Hannah grow to womanhood, and feeling that any day the control of Heart's Delight might fall away from him, and that Hannah might be a source of some trouble which he could not define, the master began to long for rest and security. Already, without having told anyone of the circumstance, he had had a serious altercation with one Lester Bentz, who had recently established a fishing station at Heart's Delight with the governor's permission. Lester Bentz was supposed to be a dissenter of the acute type, a Puritan of pronounced views. He had taken exception to the local influence of Father Lavello, and, remonstrated with by Plympton, had followed him home, and on the threshold of the Great House had offered him a compromise. "Give me thy daughter Hannah," he had said, "and I will be neuter. I don't say that I would not even join thy Church; so deep is my love for the maiden, so powerfully hath she ensnared my heart!"

"Promise me," Plympton had said, taking Bentz by the throat, "that you will never dare to say a word of this to my daughter; that you will never dare so much as to look at her; or by the Church you insult I will bait the wolf-traps with your wretched carcass!"

Lester Bentz had promised and kept his vow; but he hoped for an opportunity to be revenged on both Plympton and his daughter.

It will be seen, therefore, by the most casual reader of this opening chapter of a romantic and tragic history, that the time was in every respect favorable for Alan Keith to disclose the secret of his love for the belle of Heart's Delight.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER THE FISHING FLEET HAD SAILED.

On a fine autumn evening, at the close of the fisheries, when the last ship had raised her anchor and sailed away, Alan Keith and Master Plympton sat in the porch of what was called the Great House, in the pleasant harbor of Heart's Delight.

The title of the Plympton home was, however, the greatest thing about it. Greatness is a matter of comparison. By comparison with the other dwellings of Heart's Delight, Plympton's, it is true, was quite a mansion. For all that, compared with what we in England regard as a great house, it was no better than a hut. It was a sort of log bungalow, a pioneer's abode, on the frontiers of civilization. It had no upper story, but consisted of a series of chambers, with one general living room, that was kitchen and drawing room in one. It was better furnished than might have been expected. On one side of the room there was a great old dresser from Devonshire; on the other a dower-chest full of linen that had belonged to Hannah's grandmother. It had been brought over to Heart's Delight in one of the fishing vessels from Dartmouth. The south side, facing the harbor, was partly filled with a bay window, the lower half of which was a cushioned seat, covered with skins and rugs. On the opposite side of the room was the ingle-nook, with a home-made settle, the production of a local carpenter. The pride of the place was an eight-day clock in a Spanish mahogany case, polished to the very extremity of polish, the clock face having almost as beaming a countenance as Pat

Doolan himself. It had dials for showing the operations of the sun and moon, and figures for the days of the month. Doolan declared that, when it struck the hour, he was reminded of the church bells of his native village. Even Father Lavello complimented the eight-day clock, which tick-tacked through many a pleasant hour on winter evenings, and seemed to rejoice in the local happiness and also to sympathize with its troubles.

On the walls of this chief room in the Great House were hung skins of beasts and birds; muskets and pistols; not to mention a couple of old cavalry swords; a picture of Dartmouth, the ancestral home of the Plymptons; and a sampler which had been worked by Hannah's mother. The floor was thickly laid with balks of timber that were freshly sanded every day. The window panes were small and glazed with leaded glass, opening in sections for air and sun. The doorway had a wide porch, flanked by a couple of benches, upon which the owner and Alan Keith were chatting on this autumn evening of our story, while Hannah was helping her one domestic and Patrick Doolan (who had been in the old days Master Plympton's boatswain) to prepare supper.

"No, Alan," said the master, looking seaward, a habit with him when unusually serious, "I do not think the outlook promising; that is, in a pleasant way; promising, perhaps, as you nevertheless see it."

"I wouldna presume to dispute wi' ye," said Alan, "but for all that I dinna see what's wrang wi' the future."

"You lead a busy life, Alan; you don't give much time to meditation, and you have only been in the country three years."

"Is it sae long?" said Alan, thinking at the moment of the time he had wasted, not having the courage to let Hannah know the state of his feelings.

"So long!" said the master, "and I have lived here nearly all my life."

"I was not exactly thinking of time in the concrete, but in the abstract," said Alan, thrusting his hands into his great belt.

"I don't understand you," said Plympton, turning his kindly but anxious face toward his friend and neighbor.

"Weel, I dinna wonder at that," Alan replied, smiling. "I dinna quite understand mysel'; but I *do* think sometimes, ay, oftener than ye imagine; and I have come to the conclusion that Newfoundland's the place for a man to stand by; it cannot fail to have a grand future."

"Then we are thinking in very opposite directions," said Plympton, stroking his clean-shaven chin. "I was thinking that it had become a good place to quit; I was thinking of home."

"Hame!" exclaimed Alan, the weight of whose Scotch accent was more or less intermittent according as his feelings moved him—and the reader must understand that in this record it is only intended to suggest his vernacular, so that the most Southern readers may not be confused with an attempt on the part of the writer to be superlatively characteristic in the matter of dialects, or so realistic that he cannot be understood. "Hame!" repeated Alan; "dinna ye consider Heart's Delight hame? Ye hae never lived anywhere else, eh?"

"Only as a boy at St. John's; but I have seen the land of my fathers; it is very sweet, and of a mild and gentle temperature. And look you at yonder picture hanging over my father's musket, is it not like a bit of paradise? It is true I was born on this island that tries to think it is a settlement. But I am getting weary of its uncertainties."

"Eh, man, dinna say that," Alan replied, taking his hands from his belt and rubbing his knees nervously. "I

seem to hear just the deathknell of all my hopes when ye talk like that."

"And what are your hopes, Alan?" asked Plympton, looking the young fellow steadily in the eye.

"What are they?" said Alan, unable to bear the inquiring gaze of his host.

"Yes, what are they? Don't get up, man. Are you ashamed of your ambition?"

Alan had risen to lean his back against the doorpost and blush. There was no mistake about the blush. Master Plympton noted Alan's confusion.

"I canna tell whether I am or no," Alan replied.

"Then out with it, man! Have we lived as friends and neighbors these three years and yet there is no confidence between us?"

"I'm but a poor fisherman," said Alan, "and much beholden to ye for the kindness ye've shown me. I might have gone hame, it's true, and perhaps have done better wi' a bit craft o' my ain; but there, what's the gude talking? a man never knaws what's best for him to do. But ye say I dinna think; I tell ye, Master Plympton, I hae thought a good deal about this country; I hae seen a many miles of it on the coast and inland; there is not a creek or a bay, not a bit of the coast that I dinna ken; there's every kind o' treasure for the adventurer and explorer in these regions; far inland there's a climate as fine as ye could wish, and many fruits and flowers, and I make nae doubt of mineral treasures that would be worth all your bonnie county o' Devon from shore to shore, asking your pardon for saying so."

"Why, Alan," said Plympton, turning round, to catch the expression of Alan's averted face, "what has happened? You talk like a man of ideas, and as you speak I could almost fancy I hear my poor father talking, for he was enthusiastic about Newfoundland. But why have you not said these things to me before?"

"I dinna ken," said Alan, "I suppose I am a coward; or may be, it's ingratitude; the auld proverb says, 'Ye put a snake into yer bosom, and it stings ye.'"

Plympton was a thoughtful man. He loved books, though he had only a few; and he believed he understood character. His appearance, while it invited confidence, demanded respect. Alan always regarded him as a superior being. He talked something like a dominie, Alan thought —with correct emphasis and pronunciation. Even when he had taken an extra glass of whisky, Plympton never lost a certain tone of distinction that was very notable among the colonials.

"Could it be possible that Alan wanted to speak to him of Hannah?" he thought. "And why not?" Alan all the time was fearing that even a hint at his desire might break off their friendship and decide Plympton to quit the country and gae "hame," as he persisted in calling the English county of Devon. They could both hear Hannah's voice in the house; they gathered that she was baking a cake for supper and that Sally Mumford had nearly finished laying the cloth, while the old salt, as Doolan was mostly called, had himself been preparing a dish of fish in the way that was most appetizing to the master; Doolan having a stove all to himself in what was called the back kitchen.

"Come, man, sit you down," said Plympton; "something has gone wrong with you."

"Nae," said Alan, "I dinna think that, but something might; it's the thought o' it that fashes me."

"Why, what could go wrong with you? Are you in debt?"

"Nae, except for the hospitality ye hae always shown me, Master Plympton."

"You have paid that over and over again, Alan, by your agreeable companionship; not to mention many

an act of neighborly work at the fishing grounds and at home."

"Thank ye, sir, I take it kind o' ye to speak of my companionship being agreeable; but, as I was saying, there is in this island everything to make man happy; and I'll tell ye what will be a great thing in the future, when the auld country discovers Newfoundland for the second time, and that's the fact that she is nae sae far from markets in the auld land, not only for the harvest o' the sea but the harvest o' the airth; ay, and grand markets they might be. That's plain to see in yonder ships, that have just disappeared, sailing into St. John's and hereabouts every season, making their masters and the merchants over yonder rich and proud."

"And tyrannical!" said Plympton, moved by Alan's earnestness; "treading out the life of the colony under their great boots, and dispensing a justice that is worse than lawlessness."

"That's true," said Alan; "I'm with ye there, Master Plympton, but dinna ye think that may all come to an end?"

"Oh, yes," said the master, "the world itself will come to an end in time. I really am thinking, Alan, that the best thing I could do would be to take my daughter Hannah away to Dartmouth and settle there for the remainder of my days."

Plympton threw in the name of his daughter by way of experiment, and watched Alan as he replied.

"Settle!" said Alan, once more rising to his feet, "and would ye settle, think ye? Wi' ships o' war goin' out against the Yankees and the French, and wi' schooners carrying their guns against the Spaniard, think ye there'd be any rest in that port o' Dartmouth ye talk of sae much? Nae, Master Plympton, ye'd just be manning a ship o' war on your own account, and gaeing out wi' the rest."

"Maybe," said Plympton; "it is like enough."

"Ye hae been assured o' your property rights, your house is secure by legal title, and your lands; since I, too, am just simply devoted to the fisheries, it is likely that I'll be able to get the same privileges; but if I fail i' that, why, believe me or believe me not, there's land even in that very bight of Labrador, away from the jurisdiction of the admirals, that might content any man."

"Labrador!" exclaimed Plympton; "why, my poor father avoided Labrador as he would the infernal regions! What is the lad talking of? Labrador! The land of devils, wandering Indians, and jabbering Esquimaux."

"With exceptions, master, let me tell ye," said Alan, turning his earnest eyes upon the master. "I've sailed right into the blackest of her waters, landed on her roughest shores; once, man, I prayed to God if there were devils with horns, and furies with fiery eyes, to let me see them; and I rowed into the very shore, and beached my boat, but there were nae demons, and naething else but barrenness. But, man, I could show ye one o' the snuggest harbors close by a good fishing ground, and one o' the rarest bits o' land in the island, back o' the hardest bit o' the coast, wi' breakers that might terrify the stoutest sailor, but on investigation wi' a deep channel o' calm water, fine enough to float a man-o'-war; it's just as if the breakers and the spray, and the bit nasty rocks were hiding the channel to gie the bravest mariner a secret rest and waterway. And once inside, man, there's a harbor, and anither way out that's like the entrance to a dock. And 'way on the south side there's a cavern that leads ye out into the open, where Nature sets up the same kind o' deception, as good as sayin', 'There's nought but desolation for ye here'; but gae on, nevertheless, and ye come to pastures, to trees, to flowers, to berries, and on and on again there's a fiord or lake, with trees on its margin that might be ane o' the blessed lakes o' bonnie Scotland."

"Alan," said Plympton, rising, and laying his hand on his guest's arm, "it is nearly supper time; we have had a long 'crack' as you would call it, and all the time you have been hiding something from me. Nay, don't go away; I am not angry, dear friend; only sorry that you no longer consider me worthy of your confidence."

"Nae," said Alan; "let us walk out into the open; my heart's too full to be stifled up here."

He strode out into the open, Plympton by his side.

"Would ye call me friend, I wonder, if ye knew what's in my heart? Eh, man, I dare nae say what I'd like to say, for fear. I'd rather have the privilege o' lookin' o'er the hedge at the thing I love than to be turned off altogether, when the owner found me trying to climb over."

"You are enigmatical," said Plympton. "I have always thought of you, Alan Keith, as frank and outspoken."

"I would be content all my life to look at the gem I coveted rather than have it ta'en away altogether because I reached out my hand to touch it," said Alan, as if still communing within himself.

"And is this all you have to say, now that we are in the open?"

"Nae; by all that's awful I'll risk it! After all, if it is to come it might as well come now as a year or two hence; if I'm the wolf i' the fold ye'd better see me now in my true character, and hae done wi' me. But I couldna telt ye in there. I dinna feel sae mean wi' breathing room. Hae ye ever wondered what kept me here?"

"I have always been glad you remained," said the master.

"I never meant to stay when first I came; and my father's deed sin' I came, and the lawyers write and write. But I couldna leave Heart's Delight. Was it the fishin'? Was it the future o' the place that I talk about? Nae, I conceived the idea to rob ye the first time I went to yer house! Ay, man, to rob ye o' what ye hold dearer than

life! I was just a thief—just a wolf i' the fold, only biding my time. It's Hannah! it's Hannah! I love her!"

A great tear coursed down Alan's bronzed cheek as he confessed what at the moment he imagined was an outrage upon a generous hospitality. He hardly knew what it was to be deeply moved, much less to shed a tear. He stood there like a criminal awaiting sentence; and no criminal ever heard the verdict "Not Guilty" with greater joy than Alan felt when Plympton said, "Keith, give me your hand; if Hannah is willing, I will give you hers."

Hannah saw her father and Alan shaking hands. She stepped out upon the beach and walked toward them, and as she did so Lester Bentz, who had been hiding among some bushes by the garden palings, withdrew more closely within the shadow. His eyes followed the handsome young woman as she approached her father and Alan, and he is not to be despised for admiring her. She wore a light print dress; it was a white material, with lilac sprays, short waisted, slightly open at the neck. Her brown hair was dressed high upon her head. Her face was aglow with health, and it carried at the moment something of the reflection of the fire over which she had been stooping while making a cake for supper. When she spoke a second time, you could see between her lips a row of white teeth, for she was laughing.

"Ahem!" she said, to attract the attention of the two men, who turned to see her make a mock courtesy, as she observed, with much pretended formality, "I ventured to call you to supper, but receiving no answer, I presumed to ask what was the matter."

"And we thank you, my darling," said Plympton, putting his arm round her waist, "and we have the pleasure to inform you that nothing is the matter."

"Been making a bargain?" she asked, returning to her natural manner.

"Something in that way," her father replied.

"May I know what it is?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," said her father, "you have got to know." And as he said so he glanced peculiarly at Alan, which somehow gave her thoughts a serious turn.

"Oh!" was all she said.

"It is a bargain, if bargain it may be called, that concerns you more than anyone else in the world," said her father.

The same little exclamation as before was Hannah's comment.

"Our dear friend and neighbor, Alan Keith, will tell you all about it."

"Oh!" said Hannah.

"Will you not?" Plympton asked, turning to the silent Alan.

"If I can," said Alan, looking rather shyly at Hannah.

"Oh!" said the belle of Heart's Delight, her eyes seeking the sandy path, her arm resting upon her father's, her thoughts in a whirl of curious but not unhappy anticipation.

As they entered the house Lester Bentz crept from his hiding place into the open, and made his way to the temporary hut which he had raised near the fish stages.

CHAPTER III.

AROUND A WINTER FIRE.

All Heart's Delight turned out to add a wing to the Great House for the home of Alan Keith and Hannah Plympton, who were married and as good as settled within a month of Alan's ordeal of asking.

In October Alan and the leading settlers went forth on a sporting expedition, which had been unusually successful. They returned laden with caribou, which gave the entire settlement skins for the winter and the Great House a fresh set of decorative antlers.

The fishing season had been fairly profitable, and the settlement generally was in a flourishing condition. The villagers had never seen so lively an autumn, never so merry a winter.

Most of the little settlements, and even St. John's, found winter as a rule dull, monotonous, and often miserable. but Heart's Delight had always managed to keep its winter bright and pleasant, thanks chiefly to the authority and good management of Master Plympton. He dealt out summary measures to evildoers, by general consent and authority of his neighbors, and by dint of his good nature helped to make Heart's Delight desirable to all decent, well-behaved people.

This winter of the newly married couple was, beyond all winters that had passed away, the most worthy of the name of the settlement. Nobody had any idea that life could be so happy as the Plymptons and the Keiths managed to make it. Good fires, plenty to eat, sleighing, shooting, homely

entertainments, dances; hardly a day or evening passed that did not count its special pleasure; and Father Lavello, a young priest, who had his little wooden chapel in the valley over against the fish stakes, took a genial part in the recreations and amusements of the settlement. Everybody liked the young priest. He could play the fiddle, tell a good story, sing a good song; and he was none the less a disciplinarian because he was a pleasant fellow, and loved to see the people merry when they were not at prayers.

Father Lavello was the chief medium of news at Heart's Delight. His tidings came mostly from his Superior at St. John's, including an occasional newspaper from London, one now and then from Paris, and stray gazettes from Boston in the United States. While he was not a rebel, he had expressed views about the rights of citizens and subjects which had set both Alan and Plympton thinking more and more concerning the prospects of Heart's Delight and the future of Newfoundland. Keith was a loyal subject, and yet he agreed with Father Lavello that Great Britain's claim of the right to search for deserters on American ships was, to say the least, high-handed. Plympton was an old mariner, had sailed and fought under the British flag, and honored the imperial banner; but he admitted there was much to be said for the Americans. He gave both Keith and the priest many instances of the brutal tyranny that had been permitted in Newfoundland by royal authority under the Great Seal. He explained that hitherto Heart's Delight had been somewhat favored, perhaps through his own exceptional influence; but the story of Newfoundland, generally, had been one of unparalleled cruelty on the part of the Fishing Admirals.

"And who knows," he said, "that our turn may not come? Not for thirty years, until last season, have we had a shed pulled down in Heart's Delight; while St. John's has seen houses dragged to the earth, their owners reviled,

their women insulted. Imagine settlers tried for the offense of building; tried on the deck of some ship that had for its master a vulgar, ignorant, overbearing plebeian, dispensing what he called justice as Admiral of the Fleet!"

"I cannot imagine how such outrages could be permitted!" said the young priest, crossing himself.

"Why, my dear father, do you not know that the bits of sheds Patrick Burke put up to cover his potatoes were removed last season by order of Admiral Ristack—admiral, forsooth—and the timber burnt?"

"Yes, I heard of it, Mr. Plympton; and the incident pained me very much."

"It would have pained you more if you had witnessed my reception on board the *Anne of Dartmouth*, when I went to plead for the poor fellow," said Plympton, with an impatient gesture.

"Truly, truly," said the priest. "I did not myself dare to interfere, knowing how much more favor the Church receives at Heart's Delight than anywhere else in the island; discretion is sometimes almost a virtue, don't you think so, Alan Keith?"

"Eh, man, but it's sometimes hard to be discreet. There's yonder Lester Bentz; saving your honor's presence, I'd like to get my fingers into his neckcloth, for they tell me it was he who pointed out to the admiral that the wee shed had got a chimney; and it was the chimney that was the offense."

"It is remarkable," said Father Lavello, "that spite of the harsh regulations of the home government, men and women continue to come to Newfoundland; men with women—even women alone. What is the matter with the old country that emigration on such conditions is acceptable?"

"I conceive it to be just the wanderin' habits o' the poor folk," said Alan, "and the idea o' change. I've often

thought myself—again saving your reverence's presence—that after all the punishment o' the Wandering Jew was na sae bad if he could only hae gotten his food regular and in comfort."

"That is a pretty sentiment to settle down with," said Hannah, looking up from her sewing.

"It's just what they might call a post-nuptial sentiment, Hannah, for I dinna hold wi' 'it now, be sure. It's your father who wants to leave Heart's Delight, not me."

"I believe you, Alan; but if father does talk of the old country, after all it is only to give us what he calls security; and in his declining years it is natural that he should think of his own land."

"That's where I dinna agree with the dear guidman," Keith answered. "Dartmouth is nae his countrie; he was born at St. John's, where his mither and father are buried, and surely that makes Newfoundland his countrie."

"That is true," said Plympton, "but once, when I was a man, Alan, I went to Plymouth with one of the Fishing Admirals and made a stay in Devonshire, and it's a fine country, I can tell you, Alan; a sweet land of stream and valley."

"Weel, and Perth is na sae bad, I'm thinking; but what's the matter wi' Newfoundland? We'll get rid o' the Fishing Admirals one o' these days; and if we don't, why we must gae to an unfrequented part outside the official boundaries, and make a paradise there; we can do it, can't we, Hannah?"

"Eh, Alan, you are so romantic," Hannah replied, with a smile of admiration.

They were an interesting family gathering, sitting by the fire, which sent a glow over walls and ceiling. It was a great wood fire that crackled and spluttered until it smoldered down into a silent heat, and then the old salt, Pat Doolan, brought fresh logs and put them on. The new

fuel was heralded as it were by swarms of golden bees, that went sailing up the wide chimney and out into the starlight night. Father Lavello was smoking a long pipe, and sitting in a highbacked chair. Master Plympton was ensconced in the window seat, where, drawing aside the curtain, he could see the broad ocean right across a wilderness of snow that made a white woolly carpet all over the long sandy beach. They had not closed the shutters. It was Plympton's house where they had all supped, and he liked the view at all times from the big front window that overlooked the bay. Hannah was sewing by the table in the light of a small oil lamp, and Alan was sprawling almost at her feet upon a rug of wolf skins, and looking into the fire. Lavello had mentioned the probability of his having to leave Heart's Delight, at least for a time. Alan expressed his deep regret at the suggestion of such a possibility. He liked the young priest, and they had often discussed together the destiny of the colony and the quarrels of the old country with America.

"And where should you be likely to go, Father Lavello?" asked Hannah, looking up from her patchwork.

"To Italy," said the priest. "I was born in Italy, you know, and I conclude there is a plan to do me a kindness by giving me duty in Venice."

"In Venice!" exclaimed Hannah. "I have heard mariners say that Venice is the most lovely city in the whole world—built in the sea, nearly every house a marble palace. It's too much to be believed."

"Ah, my dear," said Plympton, "you have known nothing better than Heart's Delight and St. John's; you don't understand what fine brick and stone houses are; as for marble palaces; they are dreams, my love, to one who has never seen them."

"Have you never sailed to Venice, Alan?" she asked.

"No," said Alan, "I hae mostly navigated the stormy

waters of the Atlantic. I know more about icebergs; they make white palaces sometimes on a mariner's course like fairy pictures, and just as deevilish if ye had to trust to the impish lights and strange forms they gie themsel's."

"I love Venice," said the priest thoughtfully, as he refilled his pipe, "and my mother lives in Florence; but I have no desire to leave you, my friends, no wish to give up the work our Holy Father has given me here in Heart's Delight."

"Father Lavello," said Plympton, leaving his seat by the window and shaking the priest by the hand, "we owe you a debt we can never pay, as friend and adviser; and as a priest with authority, I have never known one so merciful of his discipline. I pray God you may remain with us."

"Amen!" said Alan.

"I thank you, dear friends," said the priest.

CHAPTER IV.

"TO YOUR TENTS, O ISRAEL!"

When the summer came again, and the world of Newfoundland was bright with fresh foliage, and the shores of Heart's Delight busy with harvesters of the sea, the *Anne of Dartmouth* sailed in, first of all the season's ships. Thus was Ristack once more admiral of the fleet. Ruddock, advanced to be master of the *Pioneer*, was the second to cast anchor, and was therefore vice admiral. They began their ugly work with malicious promptitude.

Hannah Keith was nursing her firstborn. She was not in robust health. The medical science of the little colony was not of the highest, and Mrs. Keith had undergone a severe time, but was mending with the return of genial weather. The boy had been christened David, after his grandfather, and promised to be strong and hearty.

Keith, the proud and loving husband and father, was getting his nets ready for work. Plympton was standing on the shore watching the arrival of the ships, and gathering bits of news of the lands beyond the sea, when Admiral Ristack accosted the popular settler.

"Master Plympton," said Ristack, "I greet you."

"Good-day, Master Ristack," said Plympton, "and welcome once more to Heart's Delight!"

There was not much of the ring of sincerity in Plympton's voice. He did not like Ristack; but he was courteous to all, and respected authority.

Ristack (a short, stodgy, ill-favored man, with small eyes set as close together as a thick stumpy nose would permit),

tugging up his great boots and giving his belt an extra eyelet, faced Plympton somewhat aggressively, remarking, "I don't know that you have much cause to welcome me this trip; I bring orders you will not like, but I am in duty bound to fulfill them."

"And what may they be, Master Ristack?" asked Plympton.

"*Admiral* Ristack, if it so please you, Master Plympton," said Ristack, fastening the button of his belt.

"So be it!" Plympton replied. "Admiral Ristack, since we stand on ceremony."

"You have not been used to stand on ceremony, Master Plympton, but the government have a mind to enforce both ceremony and law at last. From this time forth every building within six miles from the shore is either to be razed to the ground or taken over for the fisheries."

"Indeed," said Plympton, looking at the admiral and then turning his face in the direction of his son-in-law, "such a visitation upon Heart's Delight would be in contravention of rights that have been ratified both by kings and envoys; and Sir David Kirke had double endowment of this particular settlement, he and his heirs forever. Furthermore——"

"Sir David Kirke be hanged, sir!' exclaimed Ristack; "and a murrain on your furthermores! I summons you to quit yonder building which you have the boldness to call the Great House, and I give you twenty-four hours to put away such of your effects as you may desire to preserve; I have need of some of the other huts for the fisheries, but I can dispense with the Great House and so can His Majesty; though it might make a good fishhouse and flake; but that will be considered by myself and the other admirals."

Plympton, somewhat dazed, passed his hand over his forehead, and shook himself as if from a dream.

"I expected it would stagger you somewhat, Master

Plympton," said the admiral, "but you have had a long innings at Heart's Delight. You've sported it as a king might, and you've laid by for stormy weather. I've heard of your remittances to the Bank of England, and I take occasion to congratulate you on your London deposits; you may need them now."

"Do you mean to tell me, Master Ristack, that——"

"*Admiral* Ristack, if it please you," interrupted the ruffian.

"Admiral Ristack—by the lord you do well to remind me how a great title can be borne by——"

"An honest man," said Ristack, in a loud, boisterous manner, "and one who owns his lands by rightful title, and builds his house not on the sands, where storm and tempest may wash it away, but upon the rock, sir. And mark me, Master Plympton, it does not behove a man in your position to flout the Admiral of the Fishing Fleet, who represents authority that is stamped with the Great Seal of the realm, sir; and I'd have you to understand that!"

Alan Keith, seeing that the two men were engaged in an angry altercation, left his nets and came up to them; as did also Vice Admiral Ruddock, accompanied by several sailors and fishermen from the ships.

"Allow me, Master Plympton," said Ristack, "to introduce to your notice my colleague, Vice Admiral Ruddock, of the *Pioneer;* he will bear me out in what I have said."

Plympton bowed his head slightly to Ruddock, a wiry fellow with lantern jaws, and a strong vulpine mouth, firm and cruel. He wore something between an officer's uniform and a fisherman's jacket, with boots of an exaggerative pattern, and round his neck a heavy gilt chain. There was a touch of the mountebank in Ruddock's uniform; it was quite in keeping with the grotesque idea of the home authorities in giving such men the title of admiral, and it was fitting that they should suggest the pirate in their style

and manner, seeing that they wielded powers little inferior to those which pirates exercised by force of numbers, audacity, and unscrupulous followers.

"What's gane wrang?" asked Alan Keith, standing forth, and dominating the little crowd with his masterful personality.

"This master of the *Anne of Dartmouth*," said Plympton.

"Who is Admiral of the Fleet," interrupted Ristack.

"The first arrival; therefore Admiral of the Fleet," said Plympton.

"And therefore the king's representative for the time being," said Ristack.

"And with new powers, d'ye mind, from London," added Vice Admiral Ruddock.

"To the deil wi' your palaver and fine phrases!" said Keith. "What's the business?"

"It's just this, my man," said Ristack, assuming his most pompous manner, "that Heart's Delight has to obey the law that makes it and St. John's and the rest, what was always intended from the first, a training ground for His Majesty's fleet, and a fishing station for His Majesty's Fishing Admirals; since you ask, why that's the business."

"Weel, and in what have we broken the law here at Heart's Delight?" asked Keith. "Have we nae been loyal to His Majesty, and honest, kept the peace, nae listened to sedition, and paid our way?"

"Oh, you're a mighty fine company," said Ristack scornfully, "all kinds of ye, Scotch and Irish and French too, I make no doubt; and ye have built yerselves fine houses, and made yerselves gardens, and flown in the face of the laws and the conditions of the fisheries; but you've got to bend to the King's Majesty and the admirals——"

"And the long and the short of it is," said Ruddock, coming to the aid of his chief, "that Heart's Delight has to be moved; that is, such of it as is illegal."

"There's only one man in the place who has had the grace to obey the law," said Ristack, his eyes falling on the figure of Lester Bentz, "and I'm glad to see him here."

There was a murmur of dissent from the little crowd of men of Heart's Delight, who were now attracted to the scene.

"And what's it amount to?" asked Keith, "the matter ye hae got to say to Master Plympton?"

"It is not to Master Plympton alone," Ristack replied, "but to others; indeed to all of you who have built and made gardens within the limits of the fisheries; if you insist on staying in the country after the fishing's over, contrary to the rules and conditions of the regulations which come from the Star Chamber downward until now, why ye must go inland—six miles at the shortest."

"Go inland!" exclaimed Keith.

"I said inland; and that is only a general permission and it does not mean that it gives you any rights of planting, but only rights to herd with the moose, the fox, and such like; but with no more rights than the fox has, and the wolf, and the moose. Your houses by the shore must come down; that's the business, Master Alan Keith, I was talking over with Master Plympton when ye came up."

"What!" exclaimed Keith, "d'ye say we mun pull our hooses down? Pull 'em down! The Great House, and the wee bit hut we hae added to it last autumn?"

"Every log of 'em," said Ristack, "and within the next twenty-four hours the work must begin. I give ye that time to get out your belongings; that done, the rest can go on as quickly as hands can wipe out the offenses to the King's Majesty."

Ristack brought in the name of the King as often as he could, to shield his own conduct. Kings and governments, when they delegate power to their instruments and officers, would do well to remember that if the Great Seal covers a

despotic action they alone are held up as the instigators and authors of the wrong that is being done; while on the other hand their good deeds are often claimed by the officials or others who are the mere agents who carry them out.

"And, moreover," said Ruddock, "you have defied the government, inasmuch as ye have permitted a Roman Catholic priest to settle among you, and perform the obnoxious rites of mass. Did ye not know that at a court held at Harbor Main, September 25, 1755, that an order was given to the magistrates commanding that a certain individual who had permitted that thing to be done in one of his fish rooms, he being present himself contrary to law, and against our sovereign lord the King, was fined in the sum of fifty pounds, the fish rooms demolished, and the owner thereof compelled to quit the harbor of St. John's!"

"I have heard o' outrages done by what ye call the magistrates commanding," replied Keith; "the particular one ye name is news to me. But let me tell ye, Master Ristack, that we stand on our own ground at Heart's Delight; and I think my neebors will agree wi' me that His Majesty has jest enough on his hands at present without vexing his honest subjects in Newfoundland."

"Oh, that's your answer, is it?" said Ristack.

"Master Plympton, it will be well for you to restrain your friend," remarked Ruddock.

Keith turned upon Ruddock with a scowl, and by this time nearly all the people of Heart's Delight were on the beach. Several boats from the Fishing Fleet were landing men. The scene became animated. It was a glorious June day, the sea perfectly calm, a pleasant breeze blowing over the land.

"Keith," said Plympton, "we will see the admiral's authority."

"Here it is," said the admiral, producing a formidable

looking parchment, with a tin case dangling from it by a cord, plaited, and inside the case the Great Seal of His Majesty George III.; "perhaps the vice admiral will read it?"

"I would prefer to read it myself," said Plympton.

'Nay, then, read it yourself, and much good may the exercise do you," said Ristack, handing Master Plympton the parchment.

The people talked among themselves while Plympton was glancing over the document; its purport was already known, and was repeated from one to another. Lester Bentz kept close to Ruddock. Many of the settlers were talking loudly and gesticulating. Some of them were already in altercation with the fishermen of *The Pioneer* and the *Anne of Dartmouth*.

"Friends and neighbors," said Plympton. His well-known voice was sufficient to beget immediate silence. He had let fall his soft Cromwellian hat, and standing there bareheaded, his white locks falling about his fine forehead, he looked the father of the settlement; still, however, so physically strong and lithe that he might have given many a younger man a tussle in a wrestling match or a bout at single-stick. "Friends and neighbors," he said, "this document under the Great Seal of England—how obtained it is not for me to say, for who knows what interests and influences are brought to bear upon our rights and privileges in London——"

"Master Plympton, I must request——" began the admiral, interrupting the speaker.

"Sir, do not interrupt me," said Plympton impatiently.

"By God, if he does, I'll choke him, were he fifty times an admiral!" exclaimed Keith, no longer able to control himself, in face of the haughty airs of Ruddock more particularly.

In a moment twenty sailors of the fleet rushed to the

support of the admiral, and double the number of the men of Heart's Delight stood by the side of Alan Keith.

"Nay, Alan, give me leave," said Plympton, "and you, my friends, be patient until I tell you the commands of His Majesty to these"—with a somewhat contemptuous gesture —"his servants and representatives."

"Stand by," said the admiral, addressing his men; "stand by and obey orders; stand by and wait for the word of command."

"We are charged with having built and cultivated contrary to the law; we are commanded to remove such buildings and to cease such cultivation; and this gentleman, who by virtue of his first arrival in our harbor is styled Admiral of the Fleet, is the magistrate who has authority to see these orders carried out. Nay, be patient a moment! He is good enough to give us twenty-four hours to remove our household goods, prior to the destruction of our dwellings."

There was a pause of a few moments, as if the people were mastering the full purport of the tyrannical decree; and then there was a shout of anger.

"Men," exclaimed Alan Keith, striding among his neighbors. "To your homes! Every one of you to your homes! Ask God to help ye, and if he doesna, then we mun help oursels! Eh, my fine Admiral o' the Fleet, d'ye think we're dumb animals, that we're going to stand this thing?"

"To your boats!" said the admiral, catching the spirit and action of Keith.

"Ay, such on ye as hae hearts for such service as these creatures gie ye; but if ye are men, tell your nigger drivers that ye will nae stand by and see a wrang done that would mek a pirate blush!"

For a moment the sailors seemed to waver.

"Rebellion!" shouted Ristack. "Mutiny! Arrest me this Alan Keith!"

Keith drew his knife and waited. No one stirred. Ruddock ventured a remark. No one heard it.

"Gentlemen," said Plympton, addressing Ristack and Ruddock, "don't be rash; you have given us twenty-four hours; withdraw your men, and leave us to obey your warrant."

Plympton was the only calm man on either side.

"I name Alan Keith as a rebel," said Ristack, irritated rather than soothed by Plympton's judicial manner.

"And I name ye as a liar!" said Alan, his face paling with anger, "and by the honor o' Scotland, if ye dinna tak yer pirate face away, I'll mak it uglier than it is!"

"Rebel, I denounce ye!" shouted Ristack; "men, I command ye, in the King's name arrest me that traitor!"

"Ay, come on!" cried Keith, a compact knot of strong, firm men by his side.

Plympton once more intervened, standing between the contending factions. "Men of Heart's Delight," he said, "friends, neighbors, brothers, withdraw to your homes. I appeal to you in the interests of your wives and children. Alan Keith, son and comrade, I claim this once to command you."

The settlers, Alan at their head, walked away without another word, but with sullenness and anger.

"Very well," said Ristack, moved by a sudden inspiration of villainy, "I accept your mediation thus far, Master Plympton; you and your rebel neighbors shall have the twenty-four hours' grace I've given my word for. Ruddock, pass the word for the men to get back to their ships."

Ruddock obeyed. The men returned to the boats. Ristack followed them, muttering as he went, "But I'll have Master Alan Keith on board before the night's over—and in irons—by God, I swear it!"

CHAPTER V.

COUNCILS OF PEACE AND WAR.

A MEETING was called of the principal men in the village. They assembled in the living room of the Great House. Women were also present. The brightness of the morning was in sad contrast with the gloom depicted upon the faces of the people.

Three pioneers of the coming fleet were lying placidly at anchor, while far away could be seen the white sails of other ships making their way to the fishing grounds.

At the back of the bay the blue hills rose up to the blue sky. Bees were humming in the gardens of the Great House. In the room where the villagers were assembled, the old clock in the Spanish mahogany case was ticking its loudest. The full moon on its disk, glowing with the red cheeks of the man inside that luminary, looked quite jubilantly upon the meeting. How often external things seem to be especially bright when we are most unhappy!

Hannah, pale but beautiful, sat by the bay window with her infant upon her knee. Her brown hair was loosely gathered together and fastened in a knot on the top of her well-shaped head. Her light print dress was open at the throat. She looked anxiously at Alan, but spoke never a word, except now and then by way of greeting to some newcomer.

Plympton had dispatched a messenger to the Governor at St. John's. He might as well have let the messenger remain at home. The Governor had received orders to give place to the fishing admirals in regard to the regulation of

the shore, and in case of need to assist the officers to maintain the law. He had only just returned to his post and had brought these orders in his pockets. Governors, it must be noted, went away with the fishermen at the end of the season, and returned with the summer.

During the winter months, as already mentioned, the settlements were left without such protection of law as might be provided by the presence even of a weak governor. It is true a garrison was left at St. John's with full instructions what they should do if they were attacked by the French, and what more particularly they should do in case the French were victorious. They were to spike their guns and make other dispositions to render their defeat as unimportant as possible. But nothing was said about the colonists; they were to make shift to live and maintain order as best they could.

The governor to whom Plympton had dispatched his messenger was a weak officer. Moreover, he and his people were somewhat jealous of the authority that Plympton wielded at Heart's Delight. While the little settlement over which Ristack and Ruddock were just now riding roughshod was in winter a model village of peace and good will, St. John's entered upon all kinds of trials and troubles the moment the fishing fleets, with their admirals and masters, were out of sight.

In his contention with Plympton and the settlers of Heart's Delight, Admiral Ristack knew to what extent he could go. It was not necessary that he should be moved by revenge or by what Ruddock called love. He might be impelled by either of these passions or not. The law was with him, and it was quite open for him to merely stand by the letter of it and pose as a man performing an unpleasant duty. He was of a malicious nature—hated anyone else to be successful besides himself, could not endure to hear Plympton spoken of as a kindly and good-natured man who

loved his fellows and kept the village peaceful and happy by his good example. He was a grasping, intriguing man, suspected at Dartmouth of having once sold a government secret to a French spy, but he made his way, for all that, to the confidence of the Court of Admiralty in London. It is not unlikely that he may have sold the French spy something that was no good, and made merry over the transaction with the authorities in town. Anyhow, he was on the best of terms with the best of London officials who had control of the affairs of Newfoundland.

Ruddock was Ristack's tool, his fetcher and carrier, his pander, his toady, his neighbor and comrade. The vice admiral gloried in the possession of a little brief authority. He was built in a very common mold—had risen by fraud, trickery, and time-serving. On more than one occasion during the fishing seasons he had paid Hannah Plympton offensive compliments that she had resented. During the last voyage home with his patron Ristack, in the *Anne of Dartmouth*, he had spoken in opprobrious terms of Alan Keith, and had falsely asserted that Alan, in a conversation with one Lester Bentz, had denounced Ristack as a wastrel and corrupt. Moreover, Ruddock had asked, in one of their many talks during the voyage homeward, what right had Keith at Heart's Delight; he went there as a fisherman with a Dartmouth vessel, and ought to have been returned. The master was a Scotchman, like himself, and was induced by money or clanship to leave the lad behind. As for him (Ruddock) he would have no Scotchmen off Newfoundland unless they were really fishermen in the service of the masters and the admirals; there ought to be a law confining the fisheries to the men of the West.

Although Ristack, with a pretended air of magnanimity, doubted if this would be righteous as law, Ruddock contended that the men of the east coast and such as came from the North, especially a Perth man, ought not to be

allowed to become masters, or, if they were, on no conditions should they become admirals, whether they sailed into harbor first or last. Ristack in this argument was benevolently neutral; he would carry out the law, whatever it might be; that was his maxim—"Stand by the law, boys." He declared that he had no selfish motives in anything he did, but, during a carouse to the confusion of all his enemies, he confessed to Ruddock that, if there was any man in the world whom he hated, it was David Plympton; and in return for this confidence Ruddock had confessed that he felt similarly toward Alan Keith.

The authorities in London were too busy with more important affairs than such small matters as concerned Newfoundland. The rights and wrongs of so insignificant a section of British subjects as those who had dared to struggle for an existence on that barren coast, had to give place to questions that were considered to involve the national safety. The British supremacy of the seas was being contested not merely by recognized belligerent fleets but by pirates and buccaneers; and the chiefs of the admiralty were going to show their foes that no combination, no flying of false flags, no subterfuges, no accumulation of hostile fleets whatever could stand against the British marine. The bare idea that certain illegal settlers in Newfoundland presumed to move a finger that might seem hostile to this policy of defense and defiance irritated the authorities to the last degree. Newfoundland was a training ground for the navy; Newfoundland was a fishery; Newfoundland should be nothing more.

In this direction of thought and resolution the master fishermen of the west, and the great merchants and shipowners interested in the fisheries, supported the admiralty authorities and court with every artifice and influence. Ristack found it an easy matter to win official sanction for an arbitrary exercise of power, which he sought in regard

to the revision of affairs and the reorganization of the harbor of Heart's Delight, the insolence of the settlers there having been reported upon by himself and Ruddock in person, and also by letter from one Lester Bentz, a fisherman of St. John's, who had been prevented from following his calling, once every year, in the adjacent harbor by the outrageous exercise of an undue and unlicensed authority on the part of one David Plympton, who actually claimed to be legally possessed of lands and tenements in the harbor of Heart's Delight contrary to law and public polity.

It is possible that Plympton, without knowing anything of its details, felt the spirit and effect of this hostility. The reader knows that he had looked into the future of Heart's Delight with misgivings. His judgment had been indorsed by signs and tokens which were as straws on the stream of time. The incident of the removal of a potato shed in the previous season was enough to make Plympton thoughtful and suspicious. It was a pity Alan Keith had not sufficient knowledge of Newfoundland to have made him at once accept the suggestion of the master that they should seek the protection and peace of the old country.

CHAPTER VI.

FOR THE SAKE OE THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

On this summer morning of that fatal season of Ristack's extended authority, Plympton looked unusually grave, and his looks did not belie his feelings. Every man and woman in the room waited for his opinion with undisguised anxiety. "I am getting old," he said, rising in their midst, "and it may be that my nerve is not what it was; if we were within what might be called our strict legal rights, as we undoubtedly are within our strict moral rights, I should urge resistance to these officers, these pirates, despite the letters of authority that justify their piracy. And that is the worst part of the business. A pirate we understand; we fight him or we give in; but here are men backed by the powers in London, whose acts are nothing short of piracy, though resistance on our part to these magisterial powers means rebellion."

"Then let it be rebellion, say I!" exclaimed the next oldest man in the colony; "better lose our lives than be slaves to such ruffians as Ristack and Ruddock, who have been the bane of Heart's Delight these three seasons back."

"Ay, ay," said several voices.

"The thief who lays his hands on my dwelling," said a younger man, who had not long been married, "had better say his prayers."

Alan Keith, nervous, but self-restrained, stood by Hannah near the bay window that looked out upon the broad ocean. He was leaning against the window frame, and watching the unaccustomed scene in the Great House.

Hannah had laid her hand upon his, and was looking up into his face. She could see how bitter was his struggle to remain calm; she knew that it arose from his great love for her. Alan would have liked to stand forth and champion the rights of the villagers with his strong right arm. He longed to grip Ristack by the throat. He would not have hesitated at commanding a fleet of boats to board the *Anne of Dartmouth*, had he been free as he was that day when he had first seen Hannah standing at her father's door.

"What has Alan Keith gotten to say?" asked the second oldest man in the village, who had spoken after Plympton.

Alan made no reply, and Pat Doolan in the porchway, with others of his way of thinking, bit his lips for fear he might be tempted to interrupt the proceedings before Alan Keith had spoken.

"You would like the voice of the younger men, would you not?" said a stalwart fellow from the east coast of England, who, spite of laws and regulations, had brought his wife over to Heart's Delight and built himself a hut. "If I might be so bold as to speak that opinion, why, then, I am with my gray-haired and honored neighbor who prefers death to slavery."

"Ay, ay," shouted the men in the porchway, and "Hooroo!" exclaimed Pat Doolan.

Then there was a cry of "Keith—Alan Keith!"

"Ay, why does not Mister Keith speak?" asked a grim looking villager, almost as broad as he was long, with the arms of a giant on the body of a dwarf.

"I am thinking o' the women and bairns," said Alan, looking round the room. "If we could place them i' safety, it would just be the reight thing to feight! And when I look at the master there, and know how brave a man he is, and he tells us we're i' the wrang, I dinna ken what to advise. I hae got over the passion I felt face to face wi' the deevils

yonder, and I'm willin' we should be guided by what's best for the women and the bairns."

Hannah pressed Alan's hand. He had spoken without changing the position or attitude he had taken up from the first.

"Spoken like the good man ye are," said one of the women. "We might take sides with ye, and die with ye for our rights and honor; but what about the childer?"

"Ay, ay," said one or two earnest voices.

"If we could place the women and children in safety," said Plympton, "what then? Supposing we are overcome, these admirals, as they are called, would have the power to take such of us as they could seize to England and try us for high treason."

"Man," said a Scotchman, coming forward, "it's just an awfu' position! But I'm for feightin' all the same!"

"Hurrah," shouted a little knot of belligerents, especially those who had no belongings of wives or children. And Pat Doolan again raised his voice with a double, "Hooroo!"

At this moment Father Lavello appeared upon the scene. There were among the people of Heart's Delight only a few Protestants. This also was a grievance of the Ristack faction. Father Lavello and his predecessors had worked for and with the people; had befriended them in their money troubles, had joined in their labors, and assisted at their humble festivals. They had made many converts, but those who still preferred to worship outside the pale of the more popular church had no ill-feeling toward the priest.

"God save you, my friends!" said Father Lavello, in his rich, deep voice, "I am grieved at the trouble which has befallen us. I have heard of it from your messenger. You are met in council; let us first ask our heavenly Father to guide and help us to a right judgment."

The people fell upon their knees; some with a fervor of devotion, others with something like a protest.

"Fight first and pray after, I say!" was the remark of Damian, the dwarf with the giant arms; nevertheless he went down on his knees with the rest.

"Guide us, O Lord God, in this hour of peril and danger," said the priest, raising his bared head, "that we may follow thy divine will and glorify thee in our acts and deeds. We are men of peace, children of thy mercy. Thou hast given us this place for a habitation. We have raised to thee and to thy saints an altar and a church. Our days have been spent in honest labor according to thy laws, and we have striven to the best of our poor weak natures to walk in thy ways, to honor and glorify thy beloved Son, and to make unto ourselves a home of peace and contentment. If it is thy will that we quit our altars and our homes, and seek thee beyond the boundaries that arbitrary human power has set up, let the same be made manifest to thy priests and to these thy people by such natural inclination as comes with humbleness and prayer. We pray thee to inspire us with a rightful judgment, and to strengthen us so that we may overcome the devil who works against us, and to give us courage to do that which is right, and just, and true, and obedient in thy sight. Amen!"

"Amen!" said the people, as with one voice; and every man and woman rose from their knees.

"I beg to offer to Father Lavello and the rest," said a villager who had hitherto been silent, "this proposal. We leave it to his reverence, and to Master Plympton, Alan Keith, and John Preedie what course it be deemed right for us to take; whether to stand by our homes to the death or to take away our bits of things and seek new homes in the interior."

"Where we'd starve to death in the winter," remarked one of the women.

"Nay, nay," said another quickly, "we wouldn't starve;

and we'd better starve than see our men carried away to England and beheaded on Tower Hilll."

"Yes, yes," said twenty women at once.

"I have only one objection to make," said the dwarf with the giant's arms; "it is this—and I mean no offense to the priest though I'm a Protestant hand and foot, heart and soul; that is, if I'm anything. It's no good leaving this question to Father Lavello; he's a man of peace, of course —though I've heard of fightin' priests as well as sportin' parsons. But that's neither here nor there; I'm willin' to leave this affair to the master, to Keith, and to Preedie; and I hope they'll let us fight these thieves and buccaneers with the law on their lips and hell in their hearts."

"Hooroo!" shouted Pat.

"And one cheer more!" cried his mates at the porchway.

"Then let it be so," said Lavello; "I assuredly should advise peace, but I am willing that you should this day be guided, under Heaven and Holy Mother Church, by the three good men and true who have been nominated; let us then retire while they take counsel together."

"Nae," said Alan Keith, standing away from Hannah, "we hae nae need to tak counsel in secret; let us tak it among our friends and neebors. I shall gie ye my opinion right here where we stand. There's naething I'd like better than to gae forth and fight these buccaneers o' the sea, these villain agents of a besotted and ignorant government, and tear their hearts out o' their vile bodies. But we mun stand by our women."

"Yes, yes," said several women's voices, "that's right."

"There are seasons when we stand by our women most true by seeming cowards—when we resist our impulses, when we decline to tak chances. Master Plympton tells us we'd endanger their lives and happiness if we resisted these men, whether we drove the tyrannous ruffians to their ships or nae, whether we killed them or let them live; it would be

all the same, we'd endanger our wives and bairns; we hae gien hostages to fortune, the master says, and we mun tak the consequences."

"Do ye mean we mun gie in?" asked one of the young men who had previously spoken.

"Yes, yes," said the women.

"Nay, nay," cried several of the men.

"Neighbors!" exclaimed the second oldest man of the village, who having secured attention went on, "hear Alan Keith out! But let me also tell you that the question before us is whether we leave ourselves in the hands of Master Plympton, Alan Keith, and John Preedie."

"Right ye are," said Pat Doolan; "me and my mates is agreed to that."

"I accept the responsibility with my neighbors," said John Preedie, a sober browed, middle-aged man; "I am willing to tell you my opinion without more ado. Like my friend Damian," pointing to the dwarf, "I am a Protestant, though willing to acknowledge the good there is in Mr. Lavello apart from his priesthood, and I think it best that laymen should settle this thing. I would stand with any man and defend the rights of Heart's Delight; but it appears we have no rights to defend—we are only lodgers. This land, which brave Englishmen discovered and planted, is not for all, but for a chosen few; and for my part I shall take myself and belongings in the first ship that can carry us to America and join our brothers there who have not only the courage, but the power, to resist tyranny and do battle for liberty."

"Hooroo!" shouted Pat; and his national manner of expressing approval was followed by a cheer that might have been heard away on the decks of the *Anne of Dartmouth*, the *Pioneer*, and the *Dolphin* that had cast anchor within the past twelve hours, thus giving to the harbor of

Heart's Delight a full court of admiral, vice admiral, and rear admiral.

"In the meantime," continued Preedie, "I'm for peace. I'm not one, as a rule, who'd turn the other cheek to the smiter; but just now, to the strength of the tiger I would oppose the cunning of the serpent. At present, I say, I am for peace."

A murmur of approval came from the women. The men were silent, for they saw that Alan was again about to speak.

"Dinna ye think, neighbors," he said, his face white with suppressed passion, "dinna ye think I wouldna like to feight; dinna ye think it doesna tak me all my time to say 'Nae' to them as would. And, above all, dinna ye think, feight or nae, I will na be revenged. By the God above us I will, and up to the hilt——"

The priest raised his right hand reprovingly.

"Asking your reverence's pardon," said Alan; "and ye mun understan', Father Lavello, that we Scotch Catholics are nae sae tractable as some ithers o' yer flock; we are wild and uncultured to discipline. But all the same, friends and comrades, I'm for peace this day."

"And I, too," said Plympton.

"God's blessings be upon your good resolves!" said the priest.

CHAPTER VII.

TREACHERY.

And thus it came to pass that the people resolved, pending other advice that might change them—in the reply of the Governor to the messenger whom Plympton had sent to St. John's—that they would proceed to move their household goods and chattels to a spot whither Alan Keith undertook to lead them. He had in his mind no distant pilgrimage, no wild scheme of an independent kind of government away in the wilds of Labrador, but a valley known to many of them only a few miles distant, where they could build without the let or hindrance of the fishing admirals and come to a decision as to their future movements and policy.

During the afternoon the men met and made their dispositions for the morrow. Some of them already began to pack their goods. Others visited each other at their houses and said good-by to their bits of fragrant gardens.

The women gossiped about the meeting, and compared notes upon methods of packing.

Heart's Delight was very busy one way and another. The fishing boats were hauled ashore. Not a man was any longer engaged with his nets.

The second oldest man of the village had proposed that they make their exodus by water; but this was always overruled by the argument that, at whatever point of the coast they disembarked, they would have to march at the very shortest six miles inland.

Pat Doolan desired to remove the little fort and the two

guns which they had erected and mounted during the winter by way of defense of the harbor. Damian, the dwarf, said "no" to this, because they might still desire to turn those guns on the *Anne of Dartmouth*, the *Pioneer*, and the *Dolphin*. Pat was more than delighted at this suggestion and would have been willing to try the argument of shot and shell on Ristack and Ruddock at once, spite of the fact that the long guns which the fishing admirals carried would have been sufficient to batter down the little fort and destroy the whole village in a few well-directed rounds.

In this way the afternoon slipped into evening, and evening into night, the weather sweet and soothing, as if it was in sympathy with the peaceful resolutions of the people.

The law had given them twenty-four hours to remove their goods. Alan, with the rest, had resolved to obey the law to the letter. Plympton and Alan smoked the pipe of peace over their resolve in the wooden arbor of Plympton's garden during the sunset. They talked of many things, watched the sun go down red and golden into the sea, noted its caressing beams fall upon the anchored ships, and took in the sense and feeling of the scene as betokening a sort of dumb approval of their action.

All these signs of peace, however—the perfume of the first gillyflowers, the quiet sea reflecting the quiet sky, the red-gold sunset, with its last beams on the ships in the harbor and the lead glazed windows of the village—were but typical of the calm that goes before the storm.

While Heart's Delight had come to the conclusion that it would obey the law as it was interpreted in the powers of the fishing admirals, Ristack and Ruddock, in council assembled, came to the conclusion that the law would be best obeyed by the arrest of Alan Keith, the ringleader of what they chose to call the day's revolt. Ristack was not a brave man. He could fight, if need be, to defend his

own, but he preferred rather to take his enemy in the toils of legal villainy than to run the risk of his enemy's knife. Ruddock, in his black heart, had a mind to what he called a flirtation with Hannah Keith. He had only learned, after they had returned to the ship, that she was Keith's wife. Lester Bentz was his informant. Bentz had come aboard in the dusk, rowing himself from the shore. After a brief conference on board the *Anne of Dartmouth*, he undertook to pilot a picked boat's crew to a point where they could approach the Great House and its annex by a path through the wooded hills that protected the harbor from the north wind and formed a picturesque background to the village.

CHAPTER VIII.

WOMAN'S INSTINCT.

Sally Mumford had put the infant son and heir of the Keiths to bed. He and his nurse slept in a little room adjacent to that occupied by the boy's parents. He had been named David after his grandfather. Pat Doolan, considering the child's form and promise, had suggested that Goliath would have been a more characteristic name than David. But Pat had always some lively criticism for every event, and he contended, in a professedly serious argument with Sally, that when you named a child you gave the bent to its future. Well, after all, perhaps, it was just as well to be David and kill your enemy with a sling as with anything else, so that ye did kill him.

Little David Keith was perfectly oblivious of all Pat's philosophy and badinage. He had no inkling of trouble present or to come. He smiled in the most benign way upon Sally. His time was mostly taken up with an ivory "tooth promoter," as Alan called the fanciful toy which he had constructed for David's amusement. The hope and joy of the Keith household was quite a precocious infant considering his age; for at three months much cannot be expected in the way of an intelligent recognition of anything beyond the food provided by Dame Nature for the sustenance of her creatures—however insignificant.

While little David slept in the fond arms of his nurse, Mr. and Mrs. Keith sat up to talk over their plans and arrangements for the morrow. They would be up with daylight and get their household goods together, and assist

the master to collect his belongings. Their own were a comparatively small matter; but in the Great House there would be the clock to pack, the one or two pictures to stow away, the guns and swords, and all the kitchen utensils; it would be a heavy day's work. John Preedie's team would be needed, and Alan was thankful now that he had recently bought an extra horse at St. John's. He had two strong and steady animals, and the master had a pair. These with Damian's mule, and a donkey or two belonging to Jakes, the boat-calker, would make a good show in the way of carrying power, considering that there were three wagons and a couple of carts in the settlement, besides the old shay that had been brought from Devonshire when the master, years and years ago, had paid his one long visit to the place which he still called home.

They had little occasion for horses in a general way at Heart's Delight; but of late there had been something like a serious attempt at farming. John Preedie had done quite a business in potatoes, and had created a sensation when he had used a team of horses to haul half his year's product to the beach for St. John's. What plowing had hitherto been done was chiefly the work of Jules Amien, but he was half a Frenchman, and he plowed with a pair of oxen. Jules had practiced other economies in the matter of haulage and animal power. Not that Heart's Delight objected either to his dog work or his oxen, but some of the fishermen were rather inclined to jeer at a man who hitched dogs to his boats to bring them ashore and beach them.

They were fine, well-trained dogs, the two that Jules called by the pet names of Lion and Tiger. Hannah Keith often paused when she was out of doors to stroke them, much against the jealous feelings of her own constant attendant Sampson. He was a fine specimen of the breed that takes its name from the island. It is doubtful, however, if what is now known as the Newfoundland dog

belonged to the aborigines; it is more likely to have been the result of a happy crossing of breeds. Master Plympton described the genuine one as a dog some twenty-six inches high, with black-ticked body, gray muzzle, white-stockinged legs, and dew claws behind. Since the days of Plympton the breed has still further improved; but even in his time there were fine examples of the Newfoundland dog, with proclivities for life saving, and a capacity for friendship with man.

In the matter of strength, Hannah's four-footed companion was worthy of its name. Like the master of the settlement he was getting on in years, and curiously enough had recently seemed a little unsettled as to the prospects of the country. At least Pat Doolan said so; but this was only said in confidence to Sally, and it might have been one of Pat's subtle jokes. You should have seen him when he was engaged in composing his bits of waggery for the behoof of Sally or the delectation of the men down at the fish warehouses or the stages; his small eyes would fairly sparkle beneath their gray brows, and his mouth would twist into curious shapes, intended to signify the extra value he attached to any particular statement he was about to make, or the fun of which was not to be controlled.

Pat was a thickset, short, stumpy fellow, with a closely cropped head, big feet, a beard that tried to hide itself in his neck, encouraged thereto by the razor which he used every morning upon his chin and upper lip. He had a ruddy complexion, and even in his silent moments his lips were generally busy twitching in sympathy with the varied thoughts that were working within his inner consciousness. He had been in his time pretty well everything that belongs to the sea and seafaring, not to mention powder monkey, cook, and lastly boatswain to the master when the master had sailed his own ships to the chief port of New England with fish, bringing back commodities for St. John's, even

on one occasion crossing the Atlantic and casting anchor in the port of Dartmouth, which had now the unenviable notoriety of counting among its seafaring folk the Fishing Admirals Ristack and Ruddock.

Old Sampson, with his ragged black-and-white coat, was lying at Hannah's feet, while she sat upon a low stool by Alan, her head on his knee, her thoughts running with his, and his full of reminiscences of his three years at Heart's Delight.

"I mind the first time I ever saw ye," said Alan, stroking her thick hair with his great brown hand, "I landed from the first ship that sailed in that season. It was *The Hope*, frae Yarmouth. The master was a Scotchman, hailin' frae Glasgae. When I strode up into the village I saw ye standing i' the porch o' yer father's house, the bonniest picter I'd ever set eyes on. Eh, but ye were, Hannah! Ye just completely dazed me; ye did that!"

"Alan!" said Hannah, putting her white hand above her head to touch his that caressed her brown hair all the time he was speaking.

"It's true, Hannah, my lassie; and though I concluded not to return in *The Hope* and not to go back to Perth, which was my intention after I'd made Yarmouth—for there was a fellow there that sailed 'twixt that and Glasgae—I'd nae mair courage to speak to ye than if ye'd been just an angel frae heaven!"

"Alan," said Hannah, "you always exaggerate your want of courage in those days."

"Nae, not one iota, Hannah. I was just skeered at ye."

"Nay, Alan dear, not scared."

"I was most assuredly reight down skeered; eh! but Hannah, I did love ye!"

"I know it, dear; but I loved you, too, but yet I did not feel like that."

"Like what, my sweet lassie?"

"Afraid. Nor did I wish to make you scared. I remember as if it was yesterday, when my father brought you home to the Great House, that I was bent on making you feel very much at home and very content."

"Eh! but ye were awfu' kind to me, Hannah. It was then that I telt your father I had made things straight for staying at Heart's Delight until the next fishing. He was curious to know if I had arranged it wi' the admiral, and I telt him yes, that the master was a countryman, and knew my father in Perth."

"My father liked you from the first, Alan."

"Did he noo? Weel, that's as precious as a gude character frae the provost o' Perth. I wouldna change it for a medal."

"You were afraid of me a very long time, were you not, Alan?"

"That was I, indeed," said Alan, "ye seemed something sae far beyond me; and sae ye are."

"Nay, Alan, you only think that because ye love me, and if ye had loved in moderation we might have been married, eh, I don't know how many months sooner than we were."

"I ken how gude ye are to me, how much ye love me when ye say that, Hannah; but ye will allow [here he chuckled—it was nearly a laugh] that when I had yer consent I made short work aboot askin' ye to fix the very next day for the weddin'."

"Yes, truly," said Hannah, laughing in her turn, "a little encouragement soon made a man of you."

"Eh! it did that; I could a'most greet to think what would 'a' come o' me if ye hadna ta'en pity on me."

"Pity!" said Hannah; "I loved you all the time; loved you then as I do now; and I love you to-day, if it were possible, more than ever for the kind and thoughtful way in which you have acted in this trouble of Heart's Delight; you made a sacrifice of feeling and pride; Alan, that is the

sweetest, the noblest tribute you could pay to me, and the best thing you could do for our little David. All the women in the village love you to-day; God bless them and you for it!"

"My dear little wife," said Alan, "there is naething ye could ask me I wouldna do for ye; but you mak too much of this day's business. I would tae God we could hae been left i' peace for a' that!"

Just then Sampson sniffed the air and growled.

"Why, what's the matter!" said Alan, patting the dog's head.

Sampson, pushing his wet nose into Alan's hand, got up to rub his rough sides against Hannah in token of his double affection, his divided allegiance.

"Yes," said Hannah, as if answering what the dog must be thinking; "yes, we know; good old dog!"

Sampson gave a short bark of pleasure: but it was quickly followed by another low growl of alarm. He walked about the room uncomfortably, sniffing the air, and once bending his head down by the inner door of the porch.

"The puir beast knows we are aboot to quit, I mak nae doubt," said Alan, watching him.

"He is growing old," Hannah replied, "and with age comes what father calls intuitive knowledge. He has often told me that instinct in age takes the place of knowledge; he always feels in advance the coming of joy or sorrow."

Alan generally grew silent and reflective when Hannah began to talk in what he called her wise and learned way. She had had a far better education than Alan, whose training had not been through books or at schools, except such books as treated of navigation, and such schools as had mere experience for schoolmasters. Hannah had always had the advantage of the education that priests can give; watched over by her father, who was a man of some learn-

ing. Alan often had sat and wondered at the strange knowledge which Hannah possessed relating to all manner of curious things, historical and otherwise. She and Father Lavello and the master would, on winter evenings, discuss questions of travel and discovery, even matters of science and works of art which Hannah had not seen or was ever likely to; but the young priest would describe the great pictures of Florence and Venice, and the treasures of Rome; and Hannah would look at Alan and wonder if they would ever see these classic treasures.

On this memorable night before the exodus of Heart's Delight, Hannah seemed to Alan to be full of wisdom beyond woman. "I sometimes think," she said, "that God also gives to a mother knowledge of things that is beyond books and teaching. Her love becomes her intelligence; her devotion, inspiration. I somehow knew to-day, Alan, that your love would hold your manhood in check; that you would keep a calm, unruffled front to the most irritating opposition. At the same time there entered into my mind a keen sense of regret that we had not taken our dear father's instinct of trouble to heart, and sailed away to the old country on the very day when we married."

There were tears in Hannah's voice as she uttered these last words, and Alan put his great strong arms about her, soothingly, as he asked, "Would ye prefer that we do so now, Hannah?"

"If it were possible," she replied.

"Anything is possible that ye wish," Alan answered softly.

"I have no wish that is not yours, Alan."

"And I nane that isna yours."

"But your faith in the future of this place is so strongly fixed!"

"It was, dear; I don't say it isna now; but what is that against your desire?"

"My father, I think, longs for an abiding place in the old home of his fathers. He so often talks of it now. But Father Lavello says that comes with age, the memory of our youth is intensified. Don't you observe that father continually talks of his father, and what his father told him of Dartmouth and Bideford, of the famous pioneers, the busy ships with news from distant seas, the quiet homes, the rights to sow and reap without question, and every man's house his castle?"

"Why, ye talk like ye might hae seen the auld country yersel, Hannah."

"I have seen it in my dreams," she answered, "but it's too late, I fear, to see it in very truth."

"Nae, it's nane too late, my lassie. It wouldna be reight to desert the neebors and bairns just noo; but when the settlement is once mair in some kind o' shape, and ye still desire it, with the master we'll tak ship for the auld country, and welcome, Hannah. If Newfoundland is to continue under the heels of these licensed freebooters, weel then, the sooner we're out o' it the better."

"Dear Alan, does your heart or your head speak in that sentiment?"

"Baith, my darlin', baith. It greets me sair to think o' the hairdships we're embarkin' on, gaeing out o' the village to seek a new restin' place—not that the Back Bay Valley isna delightfu', that it just is. D'ye nae mind the ride we had ae day in the autumn, and ye ran aboot like a bairn gathering the flowers? We hadna been married more than a month."

"Yes, I remember of course, dear," said Hannah, "but I don't see in my memory the place you elect for the new settlement."

"Eh, it's just grand! I'm thinking we didna ride quite sae far as the bit o' pine forests—it's at the back o' that; wi' a fine stream o' pure water, a sloping bank o' grass, a long

level o' natural meadow, and soil fit for a garden. I ken the very spot where ye shall sleep to-morrow neight; I can tell ye, Hannah, that it's as easy as anything ye can think on to mak a tent just that comfortable ye wouldna imagine ye werena in a regular built and calked hoose. Ye'll hae the shade o' the trees and the modified heat o' the sun; and for the neight ye'll hae a bed o' skins and sheets and a' the comforts ye are possessed o' just here in Heart's Delight. And I'm thinkin' we'll ca' the place Heart's Content, eh?"

"Yes," said Hannah; "Heart's Delight was heart's delight; but losing that Heart's Content comes next. Yes, Alan, it is a beautiful idea and has an inspiration of submitting to Providence; but with you, dear, every place would be Heart's Content for me."

A low growl, as if by way of protest, came from Sampson, who was now standing in a watchful attitude by the door.

"Eh, man, what's wrang?" said Alan, addressing the dog.

Sampson came from the door and leaped upon his master, planting his great paws upon his chest and whining as if he would speak.

"What is it? Some puir deevil wants shelter, or what?"

The dog leaped down and stood once more by the door, watchful and angry.

"Don't go out, Alan; it is some enemy, I feel sure," said Hannah.

On the other hand, the dog seemed to encourage Alan to open the door. He showed his teeth, fell to heel, growled, and was impatient. The poor beast was conscious of his strength, and did not understand that there might be danger still for Hannah and Alan, although he was there to protect them.

The dog now suddenly dashed toward the inner chamber where little David was sleeping, then bounded to the window, and finally stood in the middle of the room, bewildered.

CHAPTER IX.

A CRUEL CONSPIRACY.

"THERE are men about the house," said Hannah, in a whisper.

"Our neebors passin' by, wi' their goods and chattels to be ready for the morrow, perhaps; somethin' unusual in Sampson's experience; that's it, auld friend, eh?"

Sampson wagged his tail for a moment by way of answer, and once more stood sentinel by the door.

"It is a very dark night," said Hannah, "and I'm afraid; it may be that those cruel men are back again from their ships."

"Nae, dinna fear that," Alan replied; "they hae gien us twenty-four hours, and it's rather to catch us in the toils o' some illegal act than to put theirsel's i' the wrang they'll be scheming; I dinna fear their presence, my lassie, until to-morrow at sunset; and then, please God, we'll be cookin' our evening meal beneath the pines o' Heart's Content."

"Don't go out, dear," said Hannah, clinging to his arm.

The dog walked quietly to the window, then sniffed at the further door, and with a grumble followed Hannah and Alan to the old cushioned settle by the fireplace, and once more disposed himself in a picturesque attitude at Hannah's feet.

"Good dog!" she said, "yes, the bad men are gone; and I pray God we may hear no more of them until it is daylight, when we can see their faces."

"Hannah, you are trembling as if you had seen a ghost."

"Those men from the ships are about, I feel sure they are, and for no good."

"Nae, dinna fear; I am inclined to think ye are reight; Pat Doolan, by way of bravado, said somethin' aboot turning the two wee guns upon the ships. The man Ristack is a great coward, and may be he would think it safe to dismantle the fort until such time as the removal o' Heart's Delight is accomplished."

"Thank God, they are no longer near our doors!" said Hannah, as Sampson seemed to be settling himself down more and more steadily to sleep. The old clock in the living room of the Great House could now be heard, as if afar off, striking the hour of ten; it was very late for Heart's Delight. The note of time was echoed by a small timepiece in the annex which the Keiths had called their own domicile.

"Time's gettin' on," said Alan; "how quiet it all is!"

"Yes," said Hannah, laying her head upon his shoulder, as they sat side by side on the settle.

"It will be quiet in the Back Bay Valley," said Alan; "there ye dinna hear the sea; but the trees mak a music o' their ain, which isna much different."

"The sea is very calm to-night," said Hannah.

"Not a ripple on it," Alan replied, "and to think o' the Lord of Hosts lettin' yonder pirate ships ride at anchor as if they were on some landlocked mere; eh, Hannah, I ken a wonderfu' place, where a man o' war might sleep at anchor while the sea was ragin'."

"The secret harbor you talk of in Labrador?"

"Yes."

"But a terrible coast thereabouts, Alan. The sailors see demons there; and it was tabooed even in the earliest times when the natives roamed this island from end to end."

"It's a wonderfu' harbor; it's a dock made by nature; a sort of hide-and-seek for mariners. One day, when it's very

calm weather, as the noo, we'll just sail down the coast and I'll show you the way; ye would think there wasna channel enough for a dingey, but there's a channel that would float a three-decker; a waterway as gude as the entrance to St. John's, but it's disguised. Eh, ye canna guess how safe it's disguised."

They did Sampson an injustice to think he was sleeping. He had gathered that Hannah did not want the door opened. He knew that the men who had been prowling without had left the immediate locality of the house; but he did not know that they had only gone down to the beach to take council once more by the boats. Bentz and Ruddock had heard Sampson's growl; also the voice of Alan. They had hoped to find all abed, both in the Great House and the annex. They had now to revise their plans, in presence of a watchful dog, and a strong and wakeful opponent.

"Jim Smith," said Ruddock, "Admiral Ristack has trusted you with the command of this thing; I am only a volunteer. It's naught to do with my ship; it's Admiral Ristack's affair, and you are his representative, and, therefore, mind ye, on this occasion you carry the authority of the King himself."

"Very well," said Smith, "I am ready to do my duty, if I am rightly supported."

"Ye needna question that," said one of the crew. "If we dinna think much of our leader, we hae undertaken the job; and they say duty's duty at all times."

"Aye, aye!" said the others.

"Then," continued Ruddock, "my advice and that also of this loyal man, Master Lester Bentz, is that one of you have a knife handy for the dog, and the others crowd all sail on Keith and secure him at any risk, dead or alive; alive if possible, and gagged; eh, Master Bentz?"

"Just so," said Bentz.

"I shall try a subterfuge," said Smith.

"May a man ask what a subterfuge may be?" said Donald Nicol, who was a very matter-of-fact Scotchman.

"Knocking at the door and begging for assistance, as if a body was in trouble; or say the fish stages are afire; or what you will."

"And then?" asked Ruddock.

"Well, the moment he shows himself, seize him."

"And the dog?" asked Bentz, who had seen Sampson's teeth more than once.

"Mardyke undertakes the dog, with ten inches of cold steel."

"That's right," said Mardyke.

"For which duty, well performed," said Bentz, "I, as a volunteer, am willing to pay out five golden guineas."

"Consider that dog dead," said Mardyke.

"Well, then, we are agreed," said Smith; "march, and take your orders from me."

"Aye, aye!" responded the men.

"And no one speak above a whisper."

"Aye, aye!" was the prompt reply, and in less than half an hour Sampson, at the moment when Alan and Hannah had resolved to retire, once more showed signs of uneasiness, and at one bound, with a great loud bay, rushed to the door.

"What is it?" exclaimed Alan, following the dog, Hannah clinging to her husband's arm.

"A man in distress!" said a voice from without "wounded—dying—help! help!"

"Don't go out!" Hannah whispered, as Alan unbarred the door.

The dog crouched at Alan's heels, ready to spring.

"Oh," groaned the voice outside, "don't leave me to die!"

Alan opened the door.

As he did so he was attacked by half a dozen men before he could strike a blow in self-defense. At the same moment, Ruddock and Bentz rushed upon Hannah, fastened her apron over her head and smothered her cries.

The attack was so sudden and complete that hardly a sound was heard beyond the first grating bark and growl of the dog, as he leaped at the throat of the very man who, unfortunately, was best prepared for the assault.

CHAPTER X.

PAT DOOLAN TO THE RESCUE.

Pat Doolan slept in a hammock of his own construction in a cabin of the Great House, not far from the master's room. He had been swinging about uncomfortably, harassed by troublous dreams, for some little time before he awoke with a groan, conscious that something was wrong. He peered out into the night. There were shadowy forms moving about near the house.

Pushing open his cabin window, that was formed like a porthole, he heard mutterings, and now decidedly a smothered scream. He slipped into his breeches, dragged his big boots upon his big feet, fastened his belt about his waist, thrust a couple of pistols into it, gripped a short hard stick, and sallied forth.

First he went into the master's room, the door of which was always left ajar, awoke him with the information that something bad was afoot, and then going out into the night, made for the door of Keith's part of the Great House.

Arrived in front of the little porch of the Keith annex, he fell over the dead body of the dog Sampson and stumbled through the open door into the room where Ruddock and Lester Bentz had bound Mrs. Keith, and just at the moment when they were having trouble in the next room with Sally Mumford. He knew nothing of the condition of Mrs. Keith, who was lying by the settle, gagged, but Sally was proclaiming her woes with unmistakable vigor. She had been awakened to meet the gaze of a couple of ruffians who had turned a dark lantern upon her; for what villainy she did not know, but of course it was nothing short of murder.

"Have at ye, ye bastes of prey!" exclaimed Pat, dashing to her assistance.

In a moment, with his short bit of timber, a souvenir of the old country, he had felled first one and then the other of the two intruders.

"Surrender!" he went on, planting his right foot upon one and dominating the other with his cudgel, "surrender, or begorra yoor dead men; and begorra I think ye are whether ye surrender or not."

Here he picked up a dark lantern which one of them had dropped, and turned it upon the two marauders.

"Oh, it's naybor Bentz, and one o' they thaving admirals, is it? Sure ye're a mighty fine brace o' blackguards, that ye are, to disturb inoffensive settlers in the middle ov God's blessed night! Lie still where ye are while I disarm ye, or be jabers I'll blow ye both to the devil!"

Pat stooped over them, took away their weapons, which he stuffed into his own belt, and then addressed Sally.

"Sure and ye are quite safe, Mistress Sally; get up wid ye and light the candles; I'll turn my back while ye put on your ball dress and make your twylet. Don't whimper, Master David, it's all right; Pat Doolan's be your side."

The child had uttered a little cry, but was hushed back to sleep by Sally, while she pulled the curtain about her and put on her things. Ruddock and Bentz meanwhile thought it good policy to remain quiet, in the hope that their comrades, missing them, would return and call them to the boats.

At this juncture the master entered the front room with a lantern. Glancing about the place he saw Hannah, and released her. "Great Heavens, what has happened?" he asked.

Hannah could not answer him. He had raised her up. She fell into his arms.

"Are you hurt, my darling?" he asked, fondling her.

"No," she whispered. She could only speak in whispers.

"Who has done this thing? Where is Alan?"

"Alan," she whispered, "has gone."

"Where, my love, where?"

"They have killed him," she said, and relaxing her hold upon her father would have slipped to the ground, but for the strong arm he had wound about her waist.

"Hannah, don't give way; be brave; be strong. Tell me, dear, what has happened?"

But Hannah was speechless. He laid her upon the window seat, and looked about for water, found a jug, bathed her face, and she revived.

"I am better," she whispered, half rising.

Then Pat Doolan's voice was heard in the next room saying, "Now, Sally, go and see about the misthress; where is she? That's right, give us light; oh, ye cursed villains!"

Before the master had made a step toward the next room the front door was filled with sailors. "Admiral Ruddock," said the spokesman, "are you here?"

"Yes," shouted Ruddock from the next room, "I'm a prisoner; release me!"

"Bring in your lantern," said the spokesman, addressing someone outside.

A sailor, armed to the teeth, entered with a ship's lantern. The spokesman signed for the man to advance, and for another to support him with his cutlass. The master stood by Hannah, who had once more risen to her feet.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Begorra, that's the masther!" exclaimed Pat from the next room. "Sure, sorr, we're all right, and little David's all right. And, by the holy St. Patrick, the man that puts his snout in here, I'll blow his head off! I mane it, be me sowl!"

There was a dead silence. The click of Pat's pistols was heard distinctly.

"O Pat, dear!" said Sally, half pleading, half admiring.

"It's a thrue bill, s'help me, be jabers!" said Pat.

"We only want our comrades; we intend no harm; our work is accomplished," said the spokesman.

"Indade and is it?" said Pat. "I can't say as much for myself, then."

"What was your work, may I ask, besides having gagged and bound my daughter, villain?" asked the master.

"We have done her no other harm; it was necessary that she should be prevented from crying out."

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed the master.

"Nay, I did not do it," said the spokesman, "but it had to be done, I suppose, and there's an end of it. Come forth, admiral, and you, Master Bentz."

"Come to our rescue," cried Ruddock, "there's a pistol at our heads."

"Pistol, by St. Patrick, there's two; and if the murdering gang don't disperse off the face av the earth before I count three I'll shoot your ugly faces into a jelly!"

Here Sally, with little David in her arms, rushed out of the room, and the next moment the child was in its mother's arms, though they clutched it with a weak and faltering embrace.

"Permit our comrades their freedom," said Smith, "and that is all we require. Our work is done."

"Master, what'll I do? Give me orders to execute the villains."

"You will answer my questions and leave this house without further molestation, your comrades being released?" said Plympton, addressing the spokesman.

"We will," said the spokesman.

"Are you here with authority?"

"Yes, the authority of the Admiral of the Fleet, and with a force sufficient for the release of our comrades."

"You seem to be a fair-spoken man. I take your word. Pat!"

"Yessorr!"

"Release the brave gentlemen."

"Yessorr! My brave gallants, with your great souls, get up wid ye!"

Mr. Bentz and Admiral Ruddock came forth.

"Thank the boy for your lives," said the master, addressing them as Pat stepped out by their side.

"I'll none av their thanks, master; the hangman will take care av them when it comes to his turn."

"Smith, you will find us at the boats," said Ruddock, arranging his ruffled plumes, and making for the door, Bentz after him, Pat half-tempted to empty his pistols into them, as the spokesman made way for them. Hannah bent weeping over little David, Sally sitting by her side and stroking her hair.

"I am sorry the young woman and the child have been disturbed," said Smith. "I don't know why it was considered necessary."

"And what authority could have justified an attack upon this lady?"

"That you must ask my betters," said Smith. "We had orders to make an arrest, which I presume she resisted."

"What arrest? Nay, you need not say, since I find this poor child's husband absent. What has happened to him!"

"No harm," said the spokesman.

"Oh, thank God," whispered Hannah hoarsely. "O Alan, Alan!"

"He is under arrest," continued the spokesman, "charged with rebellion against his Majesty the King, and other crimes."

"Yes?" said the master, suppressing his anxiety and indignation; "and where is he?"

"By this time he is on board the vessel of the Admiral of the Fleet."

"Merciful Heavens!" exclaimed Hannah, looking up with wild eyes and blanched face.

"Comfort ye, lady," said one of the ship's men, Donald Nicol, who had stood near the spokesman during the brief colloquy with Plympton, "your gudeman isna wi'oot friends."

"Donald Nicol," said Smith, turning upon the speaker, "I would have you understand there is only one spokesman here."

"I amna sae sure o' that," said the other; "there's nae a man present whose gotten a heart in his breast that wouldna like to say a kind word o' hope to Alan Keith's young wife."

"Whatever reparation in the way of explanation was necessary has been made, and that's the end of it, Nicol," said the spokesman.

"Dinna ye think I'm a log wi'oot a heart or a free voice, Jim Smith," Nicol replied. "Master Plympton, I tell ye, we're sorry, me an' my mates, that the gude lady has been put aboot, and, if I'm yardarmed for it, that's what I've gotten to say!"

"And me," said a red-bearded fellow-countryman of Nicol's.

"So say we all of us, by God!" exclaimed another, which drew forth a hearty response of "Aye-ayes."

"Men of the admiral's ship," said Smith, red with rage, "attention!"

The men fell together.

"Right about. March!"

The men filed out, Smith at their head.

"Pat, get some brandy from the liquor cupboard," said the master.

"Yes, yer honor," said Pat.

"Sally, put your mistress to bed."

"Yes, sir," said Sally, taking the child from Hannah's arms and retiring with it to her own room.

"Ah, bless it, it's a good bairn; it knows it's safe with its Sally; bless its brave heart, it will lie quiet and go to sleep."

Sally was heard cooing over her charge for several minutes before she returned.

"My dear Hannah, it's a sad business, but you must not give way. I know what you feel, but we'll soon have Alan back, never fear; keep a good heart for his sake and for mine."

Hannah began to cry for the first time.

"It is very hard, I know, but we must be patient."

"Yes," she said, between her sobs, "I am better now; I will bear up, dear."

"Take a little of this," said her father, handing her a cup with a mixture of brandy and water. "You must, love; it is the finest medicine in the world."

Hannah took the cup and drank.

"That's right. Now, Sally, assist your mistress. You will be better after an hour or two. I will not leave the house."

"By jabers, it's true, there's nothing like it," said Pat, helping himself to a hornful of the liquor. "It's mate and drink and firearms, sure it is."

Sally and Hannah disappeared, and the master and Pat stood looking at each other. "Sure, master, dear, take a drink yourself."

"No, thank you, Pat," said Plympton. "Sit down. God bless you, Pat, for a stanch, true, and brave fellow!"

"Brave is it, wid a couple of spalpeens that I could break over my knee? But what's to be done, master?"

"Yes, what's to be done? They have tied our hands, Pat; we are, indeed, bound hand and foot, with Alan a prisoner to Ristack; it is an awful business!"

"So it is; it's just the darkest hour we've had at Heart's Delight. Couldn't we collect a crew and go for a rescue? There's the little fort; we could play on the blackguard ships and cover a rescue party."

"My dear Patrick, one round from their long gun would settle us, and what could we do with a half-armed mob against their muskets and small cannon? No, Pat, we must be diplomatic; we must negotiate, and, above all, we must wait. They are in the wrong; we must keep to the letter of the law. Go and rouse such of our neighbors as may be sleeping, tell them what has happened, but without any flourishes. Tell them simply that Alan Keith has been arrested; tell them to be up betimes and get away to the Back Bay Valley, so that we keep our part of the compact, and leave no further excuse for outrage. First, Pat, we must get the women and children out of harm's way; make them comfortable, do you see, with their own belongings about them, and be clear out of Heart's Delight within the four-and-twenty hours. Our friend Preedie knows all about Alan's arrangements for the tents and shelters. God has given us kind weather for the exodus, and he will not leave us to the fury of our enemies."

"Amen to that swate hope!" said Pat.

"But let all things go on just as if Alan was with us."

"Yes, your honor."

"You understand that?"

"Entirely."

"The time may come for fighting, Pat; I think it will; but we must first make our dispositions."

"That's right," said Pat.

"Put the garrison in order."

"I see, your honor."

"I am sure you do, Pat; and now I want you to be as wily and discreet as you are brave, Pat."

"Dipind on me, master; I'll emulate the sarpent Master

Preedie spoke of, never fear. You shall find everything go just as smooth as if Heart's Delight was enjoying itself to the bitter end. I don't mean exactly that, but as if we was just movin' out to Paradise, and it was just the thing we'd been looking to all our blessed lives."

"That's what I wish, Pat; go now, and when you have seen the good people fairly settled at Back Bay Valley, then, Pat, we will talk about fighting."

"Please God, sorr," said Pat, unbarring the door and disappearing.

Plympton followed him. "I'll see you again, Pat, when you come back."

"Right, sorr," said Pat, his voice already coming from a distance, for Pat thought he saw a spy, and was chasing him.

"By jabers, I must keep calm," he said; "it's a diplomat I am, not a warrior. Pat! On guard! Steady! Stand at aise!"

Thus bracing himself to the business of the night, Pat went on his way to Preedie's house, while Plympton, holding a lantern over the canine martyr, Sampson, stooped to pat the faithful beast, remarking: "And are we sure that Paradise is meant for man alone? I hope, if ever I get there, dear dead friend, it may be good enough for such a true and loving companion as thou! Good-night, Sampson; lie there, old friend, where you fell at the post of duty. It will be a sight for some of the men of Heart's Delight to remember."

CHAPTER XI.

MUTINY.

Nicol and his red-bearded fellow-countryman disliked both the work in which they had been engaged and the authority which had been intrusted to Jim Smith, who besides being a much younger man than any of those under his brief command, was unpopular in the ship, and by no means an efficient seaman. He could read and write and "sling accounts." That might have raised him in the estimation of the men who could not boast of these accomplishments if he had carried his knowledge with modesty; but he had a way of making his messmates feel their ignorance, and he was a sneak and a toady where thrift would follow fawning.

The command of the enterprise of Keith's arrest was only nominally given to Smith. It was his first bit of active promotion; but he was all the same under the unofficial orders of Ruddock. His task was not an easy one. Hardly any other man in the ship would have taken it cheerfully; no other would have been proud of it; especially when, at starting, Admiral Ristack simply referred to Smith as the spokesman of the party, intimating that he would get his orders from Admiral Ruddock.

If on leaving the outraged home of the Keiths the men had obeyed the word of command with readiness, they did not disguise their ill-temper. Nicol and his red-bearded companion had openly murmured. Others of the men had responded to their observations in a manner that seemed to disparage the action of the spokesman. They conversed in low tones, but Smith heard them, and knowing

that Ruddock and Bentz were ahead of them, felt safe in rebuking the men who had addressed words of sympathy to Mrs. Keith. It was enough that he had endeavored to finish the business without a fight. He knew that Ruddock would appreciate the diplomatic way in which he had saved him and his friend Bentz from that fire-eater, Pat Doolan. So he screwed up his courage and asserted his position. When they were well on their way to the boats, he turned upon the company with the word, "Halt!"

The men obeyed, but without ceasing their talk.

"Donald Nicol," said Smith, "I'll report you for insubordination!"

"And by the might of grand auld Scotland, if you do, my canny man, I'll stick a knife between your ribs, if I swing for it!" said Nicol, breaking ranks and confronting the spokesman.

"Right you are," said the red-bearded one, standing by his side.

"We shall see," said Smith. "Fall in!"

"Fall in be ——!" said Nicol. "What do you take us for—a troop of marines? Look here, mates, who's this whippersnapper frae the sooth that's goin' to jaw an auld sailor, and thirty year a fisherman, aboot insubordinashun?"

"And for what?" asked his fellow-countryman, "for bein' civil to a puir devil's wife, who'd been gagged by a coward."

"Fall in, I say," was Smith's only reply.

"And I say, stand!" exclaimed Nicol. "By Heevens, we'll hae this thing out now. D'ye hear, Jim Smith?"

"It's mutiny," said Smith, in as defiant a tone as he could command.

"Oh, mutiny be blowed," said another of the crew, hailing from the east coast of England; "take it back, Jim Smith, take it back. You've got your bit of promotion in

a bad cause, and ye'll take back the insult about reporting Donald Nicol. D'ye hear?"

"I have my duty to do," said Smith, quailing a little before the third speaker.

"Your duty!" exclaimed the east coaster. "What do you think you are? What do you think we are? We are not men-o'-warsmen, nor even privateers; we're just common sailors on board a fishin' ship, the master no better than any one of us, with a power that, by the Lord, is a disgrace to our country!"

"Aye, aye," shouted the entire company.

"Take back your insult, or we'll make the *Anne of Dartmouth* too hot for you!"

"Gie us your hand," said Nicol, grasping the eastern man's big fist.

"Oh, my heavens, mates," exclaimed Smith, all his assumption of authority gone, "don't talk like that. I take it back—all I have said. I don't want to be at enmity with Donald Nicol or any man on the ship. I've been promoted through interest, I know. I tried to do my duty——"

"But it's not your duty to sneer at a shipmate 'cause he cannot read his letters nor do a sum in figures," said a burly chap, who had often been Smith's butt in the fo'ksle.

"That's all right, mates," said another. "Jim Smith's got his lesson; and we've got it writ down in our minds. That lasts longer nor books."

"You tak it a' back?" said Nicol, "that's understood?"

"Yes," said Smith; "and, more, I ask your pardons."

"That's a' reight," said Nicol; "ther's nae mair to be said, mates!"

"Yes, ther's just this," replied the east coastman. "We conclude to keep an eye on Jim Smith, and we'd have him know that."

"Aye, aye," said the rest.

"Very well, then, Mister Take-it-back, give us the word!" said the east coastman, falling in with the rest.

They found Ruddock and Bentz by the boats awaiting them.

"What have ye been argufying about?" asked Ruddock, standing by the first boat, and motioning a crew to step aboard.

"We were discussing the prospect of fishing beginning to-morrow," said Smith.

"Oh, that's all," Ruddock replied.

"Wind's changed to the right quarter, Donald Nicol says," continued Smith.

"Oh, it has, has it?" said Ruddock.

"Better be takin' cod than planters," said Nicol.

"What?" asked Ruddock, "what?"

"Donald says there's mair fun in fishin' for cod than traitors," said the red-bearded one.

"Oh," said Ruddock, "seems to me there's as many traitors most as cod on this coast."

"They'd mak short work o' the *Anne o' Dartmouth* and the *Pioneer* if there was," said Nicol, with a disputative swing of his right arm as he vaulted into the boat.

"Would they?" said Ruddock; "Donald Nicol, ye are too free with your tongue."

"It's just a way we have in Scotland," said Nicol.

"It's a way I don't allow on the *Pioneer*," said Ruddock.

"Vary weel; when I hae the honor to belong to the *Pioneer* I'll remember it," said Nicol, settling down to his oar.

"Now lads, pull away!" said the boatswain, and the splash of the oars put an end to further discussion.

As the men climbed once more upon deck they could see that Heart's Delight had been awakened from one end of the long street to the other. It was not yet midnight, at which time, as a rule, not a single lamp or candle would be

burning in the village. Now, however, the place was illuminated as if in honor of some happy event.

Not only were there lights in the windows, but torches and lanterns were moving about along the sea front. The people were obeying the orders of the father of the settlement, preparing for their exodus on the morrow, while Alan Keith lay bound and wounded in the hold of his enemy's ship.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE KING'S MEN MADE REBELS.

THE first mad impulse of Heart's Delight was to rescue Alan Keith. John Preedie proposed to man every boat in the harbor and board the admiral's ship.

"He will fire his long gun across your bows," said Plympton, "and if that does not bring you to he will fire into you."

"Some of us will go down," said Preedie, "the rest will swarm over the ship's sides like bluejackets boarding a Spanish galleon."

"The long gun which Ristack has mounted on his main-deck is the same kind of engine you admired so much on the Yankee sloop that put in for provisions soon after the ice broke up. D'ye mind the thing?"

"That I do, friend Plympton, and would to God the American was here now; we'd join his standard and fight these King George men, long gun or no."

"An' by jabers why not fight them now?" exclaimed Pat Doolan; "and turn the *Anne's* long gun on the *Pioneer* and the *Dolphin*."

"Let us not talk wildly," said Plympton.

"Saving your honor's authority, and no man bows lower to its wisdom than Pat Doolan, I am not talking wildly; it's a regular plan in black and white I have constructed; and its just this; the campaign on shore first, the maritoime adventure after; let us meet the bastes with the cunning of the fox; pretend submission, and while they're at their damnable work on our hearths and homes fall upon them and cut every man's throat of 'em!"

A low murmur of approval greeted Pat's fiery speech.

"I would like nothing better, if success could be assured," Plympton replied.

"Believe me, we'll not fail," said Pat, "and if we do we can but die onst."

"But we don't want to die at present," said Plympton; "we began by thinking of the women and children, let us still keep them in mind; if we could be reasonably assured of victory, and could follow it by capturing the *Anne* and turning her long gun upon the *Pioneer* and the *Dolphin* or, if failing, we could march inland unmolested, leaving scouts to look out for a rebel ship to take us aboard or assist in our defense—for St. John's would send troops after us—then I would say, let it be war to the death."

"Aye, aye!" exclaimed the majority of the crowd, but it was evident that the approving voices were only intended to indorse the latter part of the Master's words.

"I am for going at the murderous scum o' the earth right here!" said Preedie, his knotted forehead puckered with angry lines, his lips closed tight, his right hand clenched.

"Hooroo!" shouted Doolan.

"Friends, brothers," said Father Lavello, stepping into their midst, "be advised by Master Plympton, he has more at stake than any of us; he is thoughtful as he is brave; if you have to fight by all means fight, and to the death I am with you; but do not be the aggressors."

"Father Lavello is right in that last remark," said Plympton; "do not let us be the aggressors. We may have to fight whether we wish or no; anyhow, this day will not see the last of the Ristack and Ruddock outrage! To-day, for some inscrutable reason, God gives them the advantage; but our turn will come. In the meantime, notwithstanding the government's breach of faith, as represented by these ruffians, who disgrace the English flag, it would be folly to offer a weak and useless resistance to the carrying out of

the authoritative order of the fishing admirals. I would advise that for the present we think no more of fighting. The wise commander selects his time and ground, and does not allow the enemy to do that for him and take him at a disadvantage. Besides, some of us have valuables to protect —specie, plate ; not too much of it, but enough to give us the advantage on some future occasion. We may yet have a ship of our own, armed with more than one long gun, and equipped with the force of our own bitter wrongs."

The master's face flushed as he flung out this threat, and the crowd cheered lustily.

"If that's in your mind, old friend," said Preedie, "say no more ; we will take our orders from you."

"Indade, and we will if they lead us to ——, saving your riverence's presence," said Pat, pausing in his full run of profane allusion to a certain place which has a special charm of contrast and illustration for men of all conditions of recklessness.

"I forgive you, Pat. You mean well, but your vocabulary is ample without profanity. Leave that to men of passion and limited speech. They need the safety valve of a profane expletive. Look at our friend Bowers; he will explode if he doesn't utter one good round anathema of all cowards."

The priest's judicious interposition, and his characteristic badinage, relieved the situation of its vengeful aspect, and it was resolved that Master Plympton's judgment should be acted upon ; that, in short, the entire community should place themselves in his hands.

It was still dark. There was a clear, starry sky above. This was only enough to show an outline of things. The lights of the hostile vessels could be seen blinking like mock stars at sea. A line of light along the shore showed the course of the waves as the tide came swelling into the harbor.

There was no more thought of sleep. The collection of the goods and chattels of the village was commenced by the light of torches and lanterns. John Preedie hummed an old sea song as he helped to carry out his household goods, and he thought of Plympton's threat of a large and dignified vengeance as he piloted to his heaviest wagon an iron-bound box weighted with great locks like a Spanish dollar-chest, such as may still be found in old country houses, relics of the days of Raleigh, Frobisher, and Drake. Plympton had one or two similar articles, but the Master's money treasures consisted chiefly of Bank of England notes and bonds.

Morning came soft and sweet. With its first rosy streaks Doolan and a dozen others started for Back Bay Valley, where neither tents, sheds, nor buildings came under the jurisdiction of the fishing admirals. It is true they might, if provoked, stretch their authority and appeal to the governor for support ; but it was hardly likely, the village being quietly evacuated, that the emigrants would be molested.

All day long the villagers labored at their "flitting," as one of the east coast men called the exodus.

Every kind of domestic furniture was laid in heaps along the sandy shore. The day was genial and pleasant, the sky as blue and serene as a summer day in that city of the sea of which Father Lavello had so often spoken, and to which Plympton was fond of offering, by way of competition, the picture of a certain Devonshire port sleeping in the sun or bright and busy with venturous ships coming and going to and from all the known and unknown seas of the wide world.

During the morning, without a word to Plympton or the rest until his return, Father Lavello had taken a boat and presented himself before Admiral Ristack as a petitioner for the release of Alan Keith.

"I have a mind to keep you for his confessor when we hoist him up to yonder yardarm," said Ristack, hitching up

his belt and turning a quid of tobacco in his sallow cheek.

"I would not wish to confess a more honorable man," said the young priest.

"Oh, you wouldn't! Damme, sir, d'ye mean to say I'm not honorable?"

"I mean to say that I think it would be an honorable act to release your prisoner, Alan Keith."

"That's the kind of honorable act I'm not to be bullied into, d'ye hear, Master Priest?"

"I hear," said Lavello.

"And further, mark me, the devil take me if I don't stop your perverting campaign in these parts; d'ye know it's illegal to perform the Mass in Newfoundland?"

"I did not know it."

"Then it is, I tell you. Body o' me, I'll have ye burnt if ye're not careful of your conduct in this affair."

"I could not burn in a holier cause," said Lavello.

"Oh, you couldn't! You're a saucy priest, let me tell you; quit this ship while ye're free, d'ye hear!"

"One word, not as priest, but as man to man," said Lavello. "Mrs. Keith has received so great a shock, not being in good health at the time of the attack on her husband, that her life is despaired of; Keith's release, if it does not save her life, will console her dying hours."

"To the bottomless pit with Mrs. Keith!" was the brutal reply; "the world would be the better for the extermination of the whole brood of 'em. Mrs. Keith forsooth! Bo's'n, see this fellow to the boat."

"Dinna fear, he'll nae hang him," said a voice, as Lavello went down the ladder and dropped into his boat. He looked up, but could not see the man who had spoken.

The priest was rowed by a silent old fellow who had sought through life to model his conversation on the proverb, "The least said the soonest mended."

"Did you hear that remark, Bowers?" asked Lavello.

"Aye, sir," said Bowers.

"They will hang him nevertheless, if they dare," said the priest.

Bowers made no reply, but simply tugged away at the oars. While the priest was on board Ristack's ship, Sandy Scot had intrusted a long and important message to Bowers for careful and timely deliverance to John Preedie.

The silent one was committing it to memory. All the same, had his mind been unburdened with Sandy's message, he would still have held his peace. He not only did not talk as a rule, but on theological matters he was opposed to the views of Father Lavello.

"We have fallen on bad times, Bowers!"

"Aye, sir," said Bowers.

"We must bear and forbear."

Bowers made no answer.

The priest also dropped into silence. Calmly contemplating Bowers, he noted that the man's face was full of wrinkles, that his mouth was hard, his lips tight, his hair grizzled, his hands enormous, his body broad and strong, his legs like bended pillars, his feet so large that he might have been one of those ancient Picts that Hereward ridiculed and scoffed at in the olden days. He found Bowers quite fascinating for want of any other object of contemplation; his mind was so perplexed, he could not bring it into any exercise of discipline; it revolted against every maxim that fitted the case of Keith, the young wife, and her devoted father. Presently he began to count his beads and to pray for guidance and strength.

The room in which Hannah was lying was reserved until the last loads were arranged for removal. She had striven hard to bear up against the disaster that had befallen her. The local leech had bled her, and possibly it was the worst

thing he could have done, but the master and Sally Mumford admitted that the fever into which she had fallen had considerably diminished since that operation. The disease and the remedy had, however, left her very weak. Her pulse, which, during the night, had beaten in alarming sympathy with a high state of fever, had now fallen very low. The doctor said it would be dangerous to move her. One of the women offered to go out to the *Anne of Dartmouth* and plead for her, but the men declined to have any further action taken in the way of petition. Moreover Master Plympton's messenger from St. John's had returned with the intimation that Heart's Delight, within six miles of the shore, was absolutely under the authority of Admiral Ristack and his colleagues, the Vice and Rear Admirals of the Fishing Fleet.

It was within an hour of the twenty-four that had been granted to them, when Hannah was carried forth on a stretcher *en route* for Back Bay Valley. She was very pale. Her weary eyes turned toward the ship where her husband lay in irons. She murmured his name, and offered up a prayer for his safe return to her. Father Lavello walked by the side of the litter, Sally Mumford followed with little David, who beheld the proceedings with a baby smile. The village leech and some twenty women made up the sad procession ; and as many men remained behind, packing the last loads upon John Preedie's wagon. Other bundles and pieces of furniture had been carried a few hundred yards along the road, awaiting later removal.

Master Plympton, with a dozen other settlers, received the admiral and his boat's crew. The master was very calm. He had dressed himself as if for a state ceremony. He wore a pair of dark brown breeches and worsted stockings, with shoes and buckles, a swallow-tail coat with a high collar and stock, and a sugarloaf hat with a steel buckle and band. He was clean shaven, and his gray hair fell some-

what stiffly behind his ears. His long, sharp-cut features were very pale, his gray eyebrows looked more than usually thick and shaggy, his eyes more than usually sunken. In contrast with the blustering, pimpled Ristack, he looked like an aristocrat of the bluest blood.

Ristack had also dressed for the occasion. It is hardly necessary to say that the fishing admirals had no special uniform; neither had they, for that matter, as ordinary masters of ships; but some of them donned curious, showy jerkins and belts, with such bits of finery as might be picked up in foreign ports. Ristack had assumed a costume that was something between a naval uniform and the costume of a pirate chief. Most conspicuous was his cocked hat, and his heavy belt, in which a brace of pistols were prominent. Ruddock was not present, and Lester Bentz had also thought it wise to remain on board the admiral's ship.

"Sir," said Plympton, "we surrender the village to you as the king's representative; we do so under protest; we do so in the cause of peace. With such example as is offered us elsewhere, and with not less aggravation to revolt, we might on moral, and even patriotic grounds, have resisted your high-handed proceedings. Nay, you must hear me, sir!"

"Then check your tongue, Master Plympton, and make your oration brief; I am not bound to listen to yarns, and I draw the line at treason," said Ristack.

"A great disaster may be dwarfed by a greater," said Plympton; "since you fell upon our son and carried him from us, we have felt the destruction of our homes as nothing; release Alan Keith, and we will disappear from Heart's Delight, never to return! If this sacrifice is not enough, name some other; we will obey it."

"Aye, aye," said the men of Heart's Delight.

"If you had stowed your jaw to this extent at our first meeting, Master Plympton, our measures might have been

moderated; but at present we make no terms beyond what the law and the king's authority have laid down."

"Is that your final reply?"

"It is," said Ristack.

"You winna release our comrade?" said one of the villagers, standing forth defiantly; "ye broke your word, ye made your king lie, you came like a thief i' the neight and broke into a peaceful hoose, and ye'll mak no recompense?"

"None," said Ristack. "Stand back, man!"

"I'll nae stand back, ye evil-minded son o' perdition," said the villager, with flashing eyes, his hand upon his dirk.

"Arrest the traitor," exclaimed Ristack, turning to his men.

At once a score of villagers gathered round their champion. Cutlasses and knives were drawn. The admiral laid his hand upon his pistols, but the sailors did not advance, and the villagers did not retreat.

Another moment, and the men would have been at each other's throats. Plympton came between them. "Back, my friends, no bloodshed; don't forget the women and children."

Then turning to Ristack, he said, "Bear with my neighbor, he is a Magreggor and finds it hard to suffer oppression."

Ristack was anxious to avoid an encounter. His cause was too weak to inspire him with more than a blustering imitation of courage. He had an uncomfortable feeling as to the devotion of his crew, and his game was to get comfortable possession of Heart's Delight. It was not his cue to fight at this time.

"Draw off your vagabonds," he said to Plympton. "The law is with me and the power, and I can afford to be patient in the doing of a disagreeable duty."

"Friends and comrades," said Plympton, "you have made me your leader; be ruled by me."

"Aye, aye, we will," was the reply.

"Since you are in a judicial mood, Sir Admiral," said Plympton, "and a patient one, let me plead for the release of your prisoner, Alan Keith; it will make my vagabonds, as you are pleased to call them, content to leave you their hearths and homes.'

"Don't Sir Admiral me, Master Plympton, with a sneer on your lips, and don't repeat me. I am in a judicial mood, I am the king's representative, and in opposing me you put yourself in the wrong."

"Not so much in the wrong as your seizure of Alan Keith and the manner of it," said Plympton.

"That's as the great lords and judges of the land shall resolve in England," said Ristack.

"You don't mean to say you will take him to England?" asked John Preedie.

"I do, unless he will purge himself of his guilt by confession, and join you in guarantees of good behavior till the fishing's over."

"Confession!" exclaimed Plympton, "of what crime?"

"Obstructing the king's authority, speaking treason, inciting Heart's Delight to rebellion."

It was in Plympton's mind for a moment to rush upon the lying tyrant and choke him on the spot; but Preedie, seeing his comrade's sudden rise of passion, took him by the arm and drew him aside.

"You ask too much," said Preedie.

"I shall ask no less," said Ristack, "and now, Master Plympton, there's no more to say, I think."

"Not another word," said Preedie, answering for his friend.

"Bo's'n, signal for the carpenters," said Ristack.

The boatswain drew a pistol from his belt, and fired.

Plympton, moving away with Preedie, beckoned his neighbors to follow him, and as they disappeared among the undulations that gradually rose into the foothills of the distant mountains, two boats put off from the *Anne of Dartmouth*, and the demolition of Heart's Delight was commenced.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE FOREST PRIMEVAL.

THE evicted villagers were just as busy in laying out their new settlement as the fishing admirals were in destroying the old one. The distant mountains slumbered on all the same in the sunshine, the sea was calm as if in utter disregard of man's happiness or misery, the flowers blossomed in the valleys inland, the flag on the tiny fort showed its colors in a gentle response to the breeze; everything on sea and shore wore an air of blissful peace.

A tent had been erected for Hannah, the child, and Sally the nurse. The body of the favorite dog, Sampson, had been brought along and buried in a copse of tamarack and birch. On the bark of the tallest tree John Preedie had cut the letter S, pending a more important memorial.

Mattresses and beds of skins were placed beneath the trees on the other side of the valley. Fires were lighted as a protection against wild animals and insects.

The forest, at the point where the settlement had been commenced, needed no clearing. It was wide and open, with a bright clear stream of water dancing through it, over shining pebbles. It reminded one of the men, who hailed from Derbyshire (having run away from Belper to go to sea), of a bit of valley he knew as a boy near Buxton, the only difference being that the brook he knew was full of trout, so tame in the shallows that you could tickle them with your hand, which was a fashion of fishing when he was a lad.

The forest, of which the valley was a piece of Nature's clearing, was full of noble timber—spruce, balsam-fir, tamarack, white birch, and poplar. Open spaces, here and

there, bore evidence to the general fertility of the district. Flowers of many kinds brightened the scene. The wild strawberry and raspberry were in bud. Maiden-hair fern and flowering heaths abounded. Wild cherry trees were shedding their snowy blossoms among the green grasses. Here and there at bends in the stream, where it rested as if to provide quiet pools for indolent fish or limpid beds for water-lilies, the blue iris flourished on its banks. Water-fowl, hitherto undisturbed by gun or dog, sailed about the calm waters, and in the evening deer came out of the woods to drink.

From marshy patches, deep down in marshy offshoots of the valley, rose the rich perfume of lilies of the valley. Childish stragglers from the camp found the wild lupin, Jacob's ladder, Solomon's seal, and, more notable still, the pitcher plant, its tubular leaves heavy with pure water. A woman from Lincolnshire shed tears over a bunch of lilies of the valley. They reminded her of the days when she was a young and innocent child, roaming the woods of Norton, where acres of the sweet, pure flower blossomed. Little she thought in those days to come so far and suffer so much before she saw the lovely flower again. Not, she said, that she had been hungry and thirsty and had found no relief—life was hard enough at all times ; it had been much harder for many than she had found it with her good, honest man—and yet she could not help crying at sight of the lilies of the valley. She could shut her eyes with that perfume about her and see the cottage where she had lived as a girl, and the beck slipping along by the sedges at the botton of the twenty-acre meadow.

The people were, truth to tell, mostly in a reminiscent mood. They hardly realized their loss. Some of them felt the incident of migration to Back Bay Valley as a holiday picnic. There was something pleasant in being together, all one family as it were. It reminded some of the old

people of the first days of Heart's Delight ; but Back Bay had the advantage of trees and grass and flowers and running brooks. At sunset, several of the men returned to camp with their hands full of flowers. They straggled in more like children than men ; and far away in the distance could be heard a little company of pioneers singing the chorus to an old ballad of the sea.

"John Preedie," said Master Plympton, taking a pinch of snuff from Preedie's box, and proceeding at the same time to fill his pipe with tobacco almost as black, "we must have a strong and powerful ship."

"It would be a fine possession," said Preedie.

"Two ships for choice ; but one that's equal to any six such as the *Anne of Darmouth*."

"Yes," said Preedie, "on the lines of a king's frigate, with a hull as high as a church and yards on her mainmast like the wings of the fabled roc."

"You love hyperbole, Preedie, when you are talking of ships."

"My master was a poet, Plympton—had the gift of song as the saying is, and was the very devil in action."

"How long did you sail with him ?"

"Seven years. And we had letters of marque, but Captain Hoyland wasn't particular. It was fine business while it lasted ; but it didn't last. Seven years was a fair term," said Preedie. "Give me two, and I'll never complain."

"Now look you, Preedie, you must leave this to-morrow. They say the sloop we saw was from Salem ; they say she had been a slaver. Boston or Salem are your ports ; they have been building ships fast as the stays would hold 'em. I will provide the money."

"I am not without means, Master Plympton ; the venture being to my approving, I am in with you body and purse."

"Did you like the business Master Hoyland followed ?"

"I did not object ; if it had a spice of the right kind of revolt or vengeance, as one may say, where the ship's thunder and lightning smote a foe as well as won a fortune, why, then, Master Plympton, I'd have liked it the better."

"That is the sort of work for you and me !" said Plympton. "Seems to me that these are no days for loyal men and true ; the false and the villain prosper ; the king either has not the heart or the power to do what's right ; the government's in the hands of such as Ristack and Ruddock ; they send us weak, time-serving governors ; speculating merchants and money-grabbers make a market out of us. I'm with the men of Boston and Salem ; I am for taking a hand in the business of the sea."

"And I for vengeance, too, friend Plympton ; and since they have turned us adrift and despoiled us of our homes, insulted our women, and borne off to their ship the best fellow and the most honest of all Heart's Delight, why, to hell with allegiance that brings dishonor and a tyrannous rule !"

"There's Keith's smack, *The Perth ;* she'll serve you for the trip. The weather's favorable," said Plympton. "Bowers and the dwarf, with the Eastern man and Jim the builder, might make up your crew. Doolan must stay by me."

"Right," said Preedie, "I'll ship the four of 'em, handy men and safe."

"You could put off to-morrow ?"

"We could ; might tack about a bit with a net. Best not excite suspicion," said Preedie, with something in his mind quite different from the Plympton plans of the moment.

"If you think right. But what suspicion can they have ?"

"They'll suspect everything and provide for every emergency."

"You think so ?" said Plympton.

"D'ye never think of a rescue, Plympton?" asked Preedie suddenly.

"I think of nothing else," said Plympton, "but I am fearful of tightening Alan's irons; they've got him, Preedie, and we must not endanger his life by any rash, ill-digested scheme of attack."

"By the Lord, Plympton, I am thinking that age has bred in you such an amount of caution that it weighs down your natural courage. I'm the man now to sneak a boat alongside in the night and board the damned illegal prison, and take Alan off at every hazard."

"I honor your spirit, Preedie, but we help his cause and our own best by going slowly. Alan, cautious, would not be where he is. Come round to my quarters. I have made ready for your expedition papers, draughts, letters; you'll nothing lack, sailing into Salem. Rendezvous and flag, I have all set forth; and between now and then maybe I'll ransom Keith, that we may have a master worthy of that business of the sea upon which we've set our mind. Eh, friend Preedie?"

"I'm wi' ye to the death, and if we don't make these ruffians and their imbecile royal master smart for it, why then let's perish in the attempt."

"That's well said. But first we must provide a reasonable safety for Hannah and the rest. It is war upon which we are about to enter, and we must make our dispositions accordingly. Come on, old friend, d'ye mind our winter evenings? Good fortune and ill, sunshine and storm, bide close together, do they not?"

They met Lavello, as they walked toward the rough hut which had been run up for Plympton's accommodation. Plympton's mind was too much occupied with schemes of vengeance to be in tune for the mild and religious advice of the priest. Indeed, the triumph of injustice and brutality had so worked upon his otherwise gentle nature that he felt

an inclination of general revolt against all constituted authority, spiritual or otherwise. This feeling was intensified by the hopeless condition of his daughter Hannah.

"My daughter?" he said, as Lavello approached them.

"I was about to speak of her," said the priest.

"Then don't delay. How is she?"

In all the priest's association with Plympton, he had had no experience of the peremptory tone in which the master now addressed him.

"I fear she is no better," said the priest.

"Nor will ever be," said Plympton, "spite of all our prayers. Oh, my God, why persecutest thou me?"

"Nay, nay," said the priest, "be patient, dear friend."

"It is easy to preach patience."

"And with the help of God and the Church it is easy to practice it," said the priest.

"What can you know of that, who never lost a wife, who never had a child at death's door? Now is the time to show what you can do. Now is the time to pray and count your beads, to swing the censer and say the Mass, to prostrate yourself and ask that it may be given to you, to cry and ye shall be heard. Oh, my God, I shall go mad!"

Plympton flung himself upon the ground, and wept aloud. Preedie and the priest gazed at each other. They had not suspected this possibility of passion in one whom they all looked upon as having full control of himself; as one who would bear any shock with fortitude.

"Let us leave him for a while," said Preedie; "he is strangely overcome; he will be the better for this heart's defeat of the head."

"I grieve to see him thus," said the priest, walking apart with Preedie.

"And I, dear sir," said Preedie; "but he is sorely wrought upon by his love of Keith and Hannah, and bitterly smitten in the overthrow of Heart's Delight."

"I would I could do more than pray for him," said the priest. "I would not hold it wrong to fight his battle with carnal weapons, but I'll go pray. Master Preedie, do you minister to him physically."

The priest handed Preedie a flask of brandy, and went to his little open-air altar beneath a clump of whispering pines.

CHAPTER XIV.

A PRISONER AND IN IRONS.

Alan Keith lay in the hold of Ristack's vessel, dazed, stunned, sore in mind and body. He had fought like a lion, only to be beaten down and fettered as if he were still a brute, untamed and dangerous.

The hold was dark, and stifling with the odor of fish. The sounds of life on board the ship came to him dim and faint. The wash and slop of the waves was all that he could hear. He was weak with the loss of blood. His manliness seemed to go out of him in tears. He imagined his wife subjected to insult and injury, and when he did rouse himself it was in a half hysterical fashion. The memory of his days of happiness tortured him. His obstinate clinging to Heart's Delight occurred to him now as a crime. He ought to have been guided by Plympton, whose love for his daughter must have been of a keener instinct than his own. Why had he not taken the old man's advice? Why will youth insist upon buying its own bitter experience?

These thoughts came to him in his loneliness, happily, for the time being, to be followed by something akin to insensibility.

He could not think out any consecutive idea. He seemed to have forgotten everything, as if he were dead. More than once he must have been delirious. He thought he was in purgatory, did not remember what had happened, where he was, who he was; and he would fall a-sobbing like a child.

It was the first time in Alan's strong life that he had been under control; the first time that he had ever been

worsted in any undertaking. From his earliest boyhood he had been a leader and a master of men. In every game of physical skill he had led the way at Perth. In his teens he was an able-bodied seaman. There was no nasty bit of navigation on the Scottish coast that he had not conquered. The boldest of sailors, he was the most expert of fishermen. But for that first sight of Hannah standing at her father's door he might, instead of being chained in a floating prison, have been master of his own vessel, with a crack crew in every port. He had in his modest way told Plympton of his position and prospects. For three years his father, a prosperous merchant and shipowner, had been waiting for his return to endow him with all that a man of his character and ambition could desire.

When at last Alan began to recover the balance of his mind he could not guess how long he had been a prisoner. He ran over the events which had preceded his successful arrest. The quiet talk with his wife, his romantic plan of leading the villagers to a peaceful valley and being their savior; the sudden alarm, his seizure, pinned to the earth before he could strike a blow, his unavailing struggle, the gag that was forced between his teeth, the dragging of him along the shore, the whispered orders to his captors, the arrival at the boats, being flung in and literally trampled upon, hauled up the ship's side, dashed upon the deck; and the brutal, "Damn-you-what-do-you-think-of-yourself-now?"—uttered by Ristack; all this presently came back to him. But he remembered no more. Ristack must have struck him as he gave him this brutal welcome. It must have been hours afterward before he came to his senses. Merciful Heavens! were they going to leave him here to starve, to die, to rot? He tried to move. He was pinioned. Both legs and arms were useless. He cried out, but his voice seemed to fail in his throat.

He prayed to God for patience and for help. Not for his

own sake, but for hers, for the sake of their child, and for Plympton. His prayers were not in words so much as in thoughts. Having prayed, he cursed, uttered the deepest and blackest oaths, swore the most deadly vengeance, and mentioned the names of the men he hoped to tear limb from limb. Bentz, Ruddock, Ristack! These names he registered in his inmost soul and the name of the *Anne of Dartmouth.*

But nothing happened.

Time went on. The waves washed up against the bulwarks. The sea slopped and swished against the prow. He could tell that it was a calm night. He thought of the stars that were shining on Heart's Delight.

How could there be all this peace when tyranny and murder were afloat? How could Heaven look on and see the sacredness of a man's home outraged, husband torn from wife, wife from husband, and for what? He held his breath with horror when he thought of Hannah in the power of the man Ruddock and the fiend Ristack. He had always hated Bentz, though his absence from Heart's Delight for so many months had hushed Alan's resentment into forgetfulness. It had only been by way of what Plympton had considered a necessary warning, that he had informed Alan of his encounter with Bentz in regard to his proposal for Hannah. As he thought of this, his heart almost ceased beating.

Presently, in such a voice as he had left, he began to talk to himself as if he were someone else: "Patience, man," he said; "ye're weak enough in body to fall, even if ye could pick the locks o' these infernal irons. Dinna beat your life oot agen the bars. It's a mercy ye're alive at all. Why, man, if it werena for thoughts o' Hannah ye'd stand a' this wi'oot a murmur! I call to mind many's the time ye've torn your flesh after an eagle's nest, and been wi'oot food the day and neight, and thocht naught aboot it!

Patience, man! Eh, but how long hae I lain here? How long? It maun be half a week! O God, gie me strength and patience!"

There was a movement—a footstep—he was sure of it. He held his breath. He listened with his body and soul. His eyes seemed to be starting out of his head; but the darkness was as black as ever.

"S-s-h, man, I'm a friend," said a voice.

"God save you!" said Alan.

"And ye the same," was the reply.

"Wha are ye?"

"Donald Nicol, syne I can remember," was the answer.

The owner of the voice now stood close to Alan and was bending over him.

"Are ye badly hurt?"

"I fear it," said Alan.

"Gie me yer hand," said Nicol. "That's reight."

Alan found a bottle in his hand.

"Can ye reach yer mouth?"

"No!"

"Wait a wee; ye maun sing sma', man; it's like enough I hae been watched. S-s-h! I dinna ken the trick o' them irons, but we'll investigate them the noo. I'll first assist ye to a drink. Let me get houd o' yer head. That's it. Pull at the bottle; it's meat and drink and life to a man in distress."

Alan required no invitation. If it had been a poisoned dose he would soon have been a dead man.

"Now houd yer soul in patience, and I'll come again. Twa o' yer fellow-countrymen hae sworn to get ye oot o' this, and I'm one of the twa."

"God bless you!" said Alan.

"But we'll hae muckle little chance for the next hour or twa, and ye maun just lie quiet; that deevil o' an admiral, a curse light on him, is gaeing ashore after the midday watch. S-s-h! the bo's'n's comin' to see ye."

Alan's friend in need crept away, and almost at the same moment the boatswain, with a lantern, attended by a couple of seamen, came down into the hold.

"It's the admiral's order we don't let ye starve, here's a wedge of junk and a biscuit," said the boatswain.

Keith moved as if to take the proffered food.

"Here, Dymoke, loosen his right hand."

One of the two sailors unfastened the irons that gripped the prisoner's hand.

"Here, be smart," said the boatswain.

Alan took the junk and began to gnaw it. The hope that filled his mind encouraged him to eat that he might keep up his strength.

"Have ye naught to say?" asked the boatswain.

"Naught," Alan answered, breaking the biscuit against his irons.

"Surely, eh?"

Alan made no reply,

"It might answer to be civil."

"What do you want me to say?" Alan asked savagely. "What I think?"

"Aye, what you think."

"That you're a base coward to serve such a master as Ristack," said Alan.

"If ye were not a prisoner and in irons I'd answer that, my lad, in a way you'd not forget," said the boatswain.

"We've signed articles and have to obey orders, and if we dinnat it's mutiny," said Dymoke, in attendance on the boatswain.

"Aye," said the other sailor.

"Maybe he doesn't know what it is to have to obey orders," said the boatswain.

"I know what it is to have a soul to be saved!" said Alan.

"Don't you think nobody else has a soul!" said the boat-

swain. "You fought as if you didn't when we brought you aboard; I've got a bruise or two in token thereof."

Alan once more subsided into silence.

"The doctor's sent you a plaster," said Dymoke. "I towd him you'd a pike wound in the head; here, man, let's wash it for ye!"

"I want none o' your plaster," said Alan.

"Nay, be advised," said Dymoke gently; "give me leave, boatswain, it's the doctor's orders."

"Why didn't the doctor come hissen?" asked the boatswain.

"The admiral forbade it," said Dymoke, who by this time was sponging Alan's head with almost a woman's tenderness.

"Curse me," said the boatswain, "if I don't think you favor this rebel Keith and his fellow grabbers o' the king's lands! If you do, have a care, or the admiral will make a triangle of you and flog you till you scream for mercy hard as old Trinder, the carpenter, did last fishin' season."

"He winnat flog me," said Dymoke quietly, "and if he did, he'd get no cry for mercy out o' me!"

"Does he ropesend his men?" asked Alan, submitting to the plaster and the binding up of his head with a handkerchief and feeling the stronger for Dymoke's kindly touch.

"Does he?" sneered the boatswain, "aye, and it generally follows being put in irons; so mind your eye, my buck of Heart's Delight!"

"And let your thief of a skipper mind his," said Alan.

"Hold 'ard," said the boatswain. "I'll not swear I won't report them words."

"Nay dinnat mind him, bo's'n, he doesna mean it; but ye'd better tak old Bowers for your model, the least said soonest mended."

Dymoke pressed Alan's arm as he mentioned Bowers,

and Alan checked his anger, with a sudden regard to diplomacy."

"That's reight," he said, "and I ask the bo's'n's pardon! Do you know old Bowers, bo's'n?"

"No. Who's Bowers!"

"Oh, he's a half-saved, worn-out old mariner; me and Sandy Scot knows him."

There was something in the tone of the man's voice, more particularly when he mentioned Sandy Scot, that sounded like a hint of aid and hope. Alan, however, checked the reply he was about to make, giving the man a responsive sign of faith. It was well that he did so, for the boatswain, with an impatient gesture, said: "Here, come on, mate, we're wasting time;" and as the two stood once more outside the stuffy odors of the hold the boatswain remarked, "Mind what you're about, Dymoke; seems to me you and Sandy Scot's a bit too close. I see you cover him when he slipped down the side into the boat that brought yonder priest out. I can see through a four-inch deal as well as most, and though I don't love the captain any more than you do, I'm going to stand by, as in duty bound, whatever happens."

"It's right as you should, bo's'n; no offense," said Dymoke, an old Lincolnshire salt, who had spent his early boyhood beating about the coast and trading mostly to Boston and Grimsby.

"And aint it right as you should? What do you mean?"

"I don't mean mor'n I say. I knows my duty; but I'm no slave, and I winnat side wi' tyranny."

"Tyranny!" exclaimed the boatswain.

"My fayther and mother, and a heap out o' Boston, sailed for Salem on that account; they couldn't abide not bein' 'lowed their right freedom; and I spose it's in the blood."

"Oh, you're a fool, Dymoke; we're all Englishmen, but we must uphold discipline!"

"That's so," said Dymoke, wiping his lips with the back of his hand, and trying to moisten his mouth, which was dry with suppressed passion; for he sympathized with Keith, and hated to think of a fellow-creature lying down below, a victim to the malice and tyranny of Ristack, whom he knew to be a boastful brute and a coward.

"The admiral wants you," said the mate, stepping up at the moment and addressing the boatswain, who straightway left the able-bodied Dymoke to his duties and his reflections.

A few minutes later, a crew was told off to man the admiral's boat. Neither Donald Nicol nor Sandy Scot was called, but Dymoke was among the crew named for duty ashore. As he passed Nicol there was a knowing exchange of looks that was in sympathy with the sudden hope of the prisoner that he was not to be left entirely to the unrestricted malice of Ristack. Though there was nothing more definite in the fear of Ristack than there was in the hope of Keith, the admiral ordered a double guard over the hold.

The boatswain's whistle sounded shrilly in the summer air. The arrogant shriek of it gave a snap to the freshness of the pleasant breeze. The tall spars fairly shone against the blue sky. There was something spick-and-span about the whole appearance of the vessel as she rose and fell with a gentle motion upon the deep. She looked more like a king's ship than a fisherman. Enough had already been done by American privateers, and French and Spanish cruisers, to compel the owners and masters of British fishing ships engaged at Newfoundland to give extra equipment to vessels already in the service and to put into it new and well armed vessels that might with skill and courage hold their own against the heavy odds that English captains were

accustomed to meet. The *Anne of Dartmouth* was no ordinary craft. The one long and formidable gun referred to in an earlier chapter was by no means her only armament. She carried a very hornet's nest of guns, besides cutlasses, axes, grappling-irons, and other appliances for battle and for victory. At first blush it might seem that this was rather overdone in a merchant ship; but the *Anne* was Ristack's own vessel. He was no mere servant of a merchant company, no master at the beck and call of London or Plymouth traders. He sailed his own ship and had his own yards at Dartmouth, besides holding shares in other fishing enterprises as one of a company of London merchant venturers. He had come out to the fisheries equipped for every emergency. A man of mark indeed was Admiral Ristack, but without any very definite record of bravery or courage. He had risen to prosperity upon other men's shoulders. He was not the man to fight unless he saw his way to an easy victory or was compelled to strike in self-defense; and he had lived through such a long run of luck that he had grown reckless as he was arrogant, presuming upon his good fortune and rejoicing in his animal and sensual passions.

For all that, it must have been a fascinating sight, the preparations to man the boat, the men skipping gayly along the deck to the cheery command of "Away you go!" The crew literally tumbled over the ship's sides and dropped into their places, the brisk little coxswain at the tiller, the bedizened admiral in the stern. The boat leaped through the water, throwing up a fountain of spray, as she made for the shore where the sad hearts of the doomed settlement awaited the destroyers.

"The man Dymoke's a braw chiel," said Donald Nicol to Sandy Scot, as they swung from the yards, engaged upon some simple duty.

"That is he," said Sandy, "a dozen such and we might

hoist the rebel flag and set up in business, wi' Alan for our captain and ye, Donald, for his chief mate."

"Nay, man, I'd be willin' to serve under ye baith ; I'm just sick o' this deevlish service, wi' a brute beast, while there's better wark to be done, and prize money for the winning o' it."

"S-s-sh ! it's the bo's'n's shadow as strikes forrard, he's got the ears of a lynx."

"I thought it was eyes as they was most favored wi'," Sandy replied.

"It's a' the same," said Donald ; "keep yer ain eyes on me ; it's deeth or glory the neight, Sandy !"

The boatswain's whistle broke in upon the conversation, and, glancing landward, the two friends of Alan Keith saw the landing of Ristack and his crew. Half-an-hour later they were witnesses of the signal for the carpenters, and the dispatch of the longboat with a company that looked like British pioneers with their axes and hammers, instead of men on an expedition of shameless destruction.

CHAPTER XV.

SIGNALS OF FRIENDSHIP AND DANGER.

RISTACK was a proper villain. He hated those whom he injured. From those whom he had received favors he burnt out his obligations with wrong. It is to be hoped this type of man is infrequent. But it exists. It was not necessary in those days to be a Spanish Don to be a wretch, or a French Mounseer to be a coward. Perhaps Ristack was some mongrel, who could not be in very truth counted an Englishman.

The opportunity to be a rogue has been known to corrupt honest men. There are creatures who cannot endure success; it makes them tyrants—brutes.

Ristack, in his early days, had fawned and sneaked—had been beaten for his pains with sticks and staves. He had fawned all the same—skunked, crept, crawled, made his way, married money, stole money, got money; and when he could strike out in return he had used his power with a hard, brutal strength; had drunk and lied; fought when he must, compromised when he could; had broken down and slain, but with the legal weapons of ill-treatment and harshness, two women who had been fools enough to marry him, each with a little fortune; and here he was at Heart's Delight at the height of his success, a noisy, blustering, brutal thing, full of evil, and glorying in his deviltry. He had fairly reveled in the destruction of Heart's Delight. His hatred of Plympton was unprovoked, except through a consciousness of Plympton's superiority; but Alan Keith had spurned him openly and dared him to do his worst; that was enough to set fire to his vengeful passions.

If Heart's Delight had been the captured stronghold of an active and bitter enemy, he could not have shown greater satisfaction in knocking it to pieces. "The accursed insolence!" he was heard to exclaim, as he took part with his men in laying low some more than usually pretentious bit of woodwork, "to build themselves houses to laze out their lives on stolen land, to defy the admirals of the king, and so on;" justifying himself to his men and glorying in his ill-gotten power. It was in the nature of the man to carry his villainy to its furthest possible point.

"Go, man," said Ristack, in the midst of the wreck ashore; "Master Lester Bentz, I say, old fellow, go your ways to the new settlement; you'll find her there, the lass you love, as you call it; the lass they name Hannah Keith; be her friend, get her aboard the *Anne;* tell her Alan Keith has sent for her; tell her I'm willing to release him; give her this ring; I tore it out of his neck gear when we had the scuffle aboard; take it, man; she will believe in thee with that talisman to back thee. Ah, ah—bring her aboard!"

Bentz took the ring. His cunning nature was moved at Ristack's suggestion.

"They've rigged her up a tent, I hear, fit for a queen; go, lad; go, come back and tell us how the land lies."

"They say the woman's sick," Bentz replied.

"Sick! Why, of course, the artful hussy's sick; she's sick for her man—go and console her; that's what the landsman calls it when at sea; go and console her, lad."

Bentz disappeared. He had no part in the active duties of the carpenters and mariners of the first Admiral of the Fleet.

"I'd half a mind to go myself. But it wouldn't do; them London lords might see personal malversation and self-seeking in it; I can hear that stiff-necked old coon from Bristol saying as much when the case of Heart's Delight comes before the Council, if I did such a thing; otherwise,

stuff me with tobacco juice but I'd lay siege to my fine lady's tent!"

This was the theme upon which Ristack rejoiced to dwell, even after the sun had gone down and the *Anne* had laid aside her usual discipline for high festival.

The bite of active work had been relaxed. Extra allowances of grog had been served. The men who had been ashore had already tasted the sweets of unusual duties in certain irregularities of liquor.

Moreover, fishing was to be commenced on the morrow. All the signs were favorable. The cod had been seen to windward chasing the caplin, which for some twenty-four hours had thickened the waters of the bay. Heart's Delight was now really the fishing admirals'. The service of the fleet would meet with no obstruction, hardly with competition. Ristack had resolved to occupy Plympton's house ashore. He would live like a fighting cock. Already he had figured in his mind what things he would send ashore. St. John's should contribute the necessary furniture. He would have a rare time.

This spirit of lawlessness had taken possession of the ship. It was a lawless age. Englishmen did not eat Englishmen as a rule, but the spirit of destruction spreads. The same spirit of destruction that directs heroic action, ill-directed, will sacrifice women and children in some so-called patriotic fury. The experiences of the day, followed by undue allowances of rum, had stirred the miscellaneous crew of the *Anne of Dartmouth* already into quarrels and disputes; occasion offering, it would have led them into any excess of right or wrong. They drank, and sang, and quarreled. Sandy Scot and Donald Nicol, who were intensely sober, took on the appearance of conviviality with the rest, and went on playing their desperate game with the able-bodied Dymoke. It was part of their plan that Scot should quarrel with Dymoke, and there was little strength in the pretended

knockdown blow that Dymoke gave Scot as a conclusion to a careful harangue which Scot delivered against the destruction of Heart's Delight. It was with considerable satisfaction that Scot at once found two of the least drunk of the crew by his side, men who, while they did their duty, did not hold with Ristack's views of his. Half an hour later these two men had been won over to the side of Sandy Scot and Donald Nicol ; and the conspirators were alive with a well disguised watchfulness, while they seemed not the least reckless of the drunken crew.

"And that's all you got for your pains," said Ristack, addressing Bentz, whom the admiral was entertaining with his colleague and friend Ruddock. They had dined right heartily, had drank each a bottle of such Madeira as is, alas! no longer common afloat or ashore. Ristack had unloosened his belt, had laid his knife and pistols on a grim old chest that was packed with arms, and had ordered rum.

"She was sick unto death, they said," Bentz replied.

"Who said?"

"The priest."

"The priest be hanged—what say you, Ruddock?"

"The same," said Ruddock. "I'd have listened to no priest."

"What the hell have priests to do here, is what I say," Ristack replied, pouring out a hornful of rum, a great jorum of which his boy had placed upon the table.

"Did you see the wench's tent?"

"No," said Bentz. "They would not let me enter the precincts of the new settlement."

"Wouldn't let you! Ah, ah, by all the fish in the sea but they shall! Wouldn't let you! Who wouldn't?"

"Master Plympton and his Irishman. They were sentinels at the bay end of the valley."

"Sentinels! A murrain on them, I'll be her sentinel to-morrow night. What a poor creature you must be!"

Ristack went on drinking, while Ruddock broke up a plug of tobacco and stuffed it into his thin jaw, which looked like an ape's with an abnormally large nut in process of cracking.

"I am not a fighting man, as you know," said Bentz.

"I am," said Ruddock. "First come, first served. The admiral with his usual 'fair doos' says Bentz has the first claim on the belle of Heart's Delight; and so we allow you to take the precedence as the First takes precedence of the Vice, and the Vice of the Rear Admiral; but it's my turn now; and I'll bet you a guinea to a shillin' they don't put me off with their sentinelship."

"Give us your hand," said Ristack, grasping Ruddock's red fist, "that's my spirit, old as I am. I'd back myself to distance you both in a downright genuine love affair where pluck counts for beauty. Ha! ah! I never was a beauty; but I've been a buck; and as for women, why who cares about such paying out and such muffled oars to get at 'em! Why, in Guinea you can buy them by the dozen for a baccer box or an old knife—aye, Venuses compared with yon pink-and-white innanity. Sick is she? So far as I'm consarned she may be sick and dead, too, the sighing, lack-adaisical penn'orth. I don't care!"

"Well, I do care," said Ruddock, "and I'll have her on board to-morrow night, considering as Bentz resigns."

"Nay, I did not say so," Bentz replied.

"Drink, Bentz, drink!" said Ristack, passing the jug of rum that was as brown as mahogany and strong as Jamaica made it.

"Well, gentlemen, the game's in your own hands; humble me that stuck-up, saucy, insolent Keith, and his fine-tongued father-in-law, and you may settle the rest between you. Fight it out, and the devil take the hindmost. Bring her on board, I say, to see her man, nothing easier. Bentz has the loadstone that'll bring her; I thought of its useful-

ness when I took it from the blamed thief ; bring her to see her man ; nothing easier. When I was a lad in Dartmouth I knew how to wheedle the girls, and they were worth it. Yes, by the Lord, they were—none of your cheap settlers, but the pick of the land, I tell you. Here's to 'em as I knew 'em, and to the devil with all cowards ! "

Ruddock drank glass for glass with Ristack, and Bentz took his share. They were a sinister-looking company. Ruddock still wore his fanciful barbaric dress, with a thick gold chain round his neck, his strong vulpine mouth in grim contrast with the coarse, loose, flabby lips of Ristack and the puritanical shifty mouth of Bentz.

The porthole of the cabin was open. The night had grown very dark. The column of light from the captain's cabin must have penetrated the darkness like a long hot finger. The cabin was lighted with a powerful oil lamp, that swung from the low ceiling. It left dark corners in the apartment, but played fitfully upon sundry weapons that hung upon the walls. The brown jug upon the table with a silver *carafe* of water that was only used now and then by Bentz or Ruddock, and the heavy horns out of which the men were drinking, made a fine picture of still life, flanked as the jug was with a great leaden tobacco box, and a broad knife in its leather sheath that Ruddock had taken from his belt for ease and comfort.

They had been sitting some time over their liquor. The effect of it was different in all three. Bentz grew more cunning with every glass. Ruddock developed a jealousy of his colleague and patron. Ristack became brutally coarse and criminally vicious in his cups. His small piggish eyes emitted malignant flashes as he plotted against his victims. His face was red with robustuous and ill-conditioned inflammation.

" Curse me, but I'd like to see the Plympton lass aboard," he said ; " and a murrain on her Scotch villain ! Husband

or no husband, I'll swing him from the yardarm yet. Did you note the swine's sneer—this Plympton, this father of the settlement? Ah! ah! We've made a settlement of it! They won't know it to-morrow if they see it."

"I conclude, Admiral Ristack, it cannot be questioned that you, with full authority and according to law, had the right to destroy the place," said Ruddock.

"Right! Ruddock, what's the matter? Do you forget who made you?"

"I suppose God made me, same as he made others," said Ruddock.

"I made you, Ristack—I, Tobias Zacharay Ristack. I made you! Is that so, or is it not so? Speak, man!"

"Dear friend," said Ruddock, filling his glass, "I thought you were asking me a question out of the Catechism."

"I was, I tell you—a question out of *my* catechism. Answer me that—Who made you?"

"Tobias Zacharay Ristack, Admiral of the Fishing Fleet of Heart's Delight," said Ruddock.

"When you are asked that question again answer it, d'ye hear!"

"And who's the best friend and ally you ever had, the best second in command?" asked Ruddock, emboldened by his tenth glass of spirits.

"Ruddock the ready!" the admiral replied, "Ruddock the judicious and the sly! Ah, ah, you know you are, Ruddock; sly as the devil. But curse me, I like you, Ruddock, and you shall advance next to me—next, mark you. Next!"

"I look for no higher honor," said Ruddock.

"Mind you don't," said Ristack. "What do you say, Master Bentz, eh? And which of you's to have the gal, the belle of Heart's Delight, eh? Which? Will you fight for her? Will you fight this Scotch devil, Master Bentz?"

"Thank you, Admiral Ristack, I am not a fighting man, as you know, though I admire valor."

"But you'd fight for this siren, this Venus, this Cleopatra, eh?"

"I'd do almost anything to win her," said Bentz.

"Go on; drink, man," said Ristack, pouring out a glassful of liquor and pushing it before him, "to win her, man. What does it matter whether you win her or not. By Satan and all the imps; how I do hate the whole of that Plympton and Keith crew!"

He tightened his belt and half drew his knife as he uttered the exclamation, adding, as he leaned forward toward Bentz, "Did you ever kill a man, Master Bentz!"

"No, thank God!" said Bentz.

"You'd rather persecute and worry them to death," said Ruddock, "it's safer."

"Have you?" said Ristack, addressing Ruddock.

"I don't want to brag," said Ruddock. "I have served as a volunteer on a king's ship, and seen service."

"Seen service! Curse me, but I could spin you a yarn that would make your flesh creep; we were boarded by a pirate off the Azores! Bentz, pass the rum; you drink like a fish, and sit and guzzle as silently. Look here, my hearties, have any of us seen that cursed high and mighty Scot Keith since we've had him aboard! No. A plague on every mother's son of us but we'll have this Keith up and make him drink to the fishing admirals of Heart's Delight."

He rose as he spoke, unsheathed his knife, laid it upon the table, and called for the mate.

"Fetch the prisoner Keith; I would have a word with him."

"Aye, sir," said the mate.

"Keep the irons on him."

"Aye, sir."

"Tell him I want to—oh, tell him what the devil you please."

"Aye, sir," said the mate.

"Make no trouble; bring him quiet; no disturbance."

"Right, sir," said the mate as he left the cabin.

Keith was only too willing to obey the admiral's orders. Anything was preferable to the dark damp hole in which he was languishing. Moreover his mind was troubled with hopes and fears. Nicol, in some unaccountable way, had succeeded in visiting him not more than an hour previously. His faithful fellow-countryman had informed him that he had been able to send a message to John Preedie, one of Keith's best friends, intimating that if a boat, not to say a bark, could be handy thereabouts it might be within the range of possibility that the *Anne* would have a passenger for her, perhaps more; and the signal was agreed also. Nicol had wandered on in a whisper, uttering various hints and warnings; and had disappeared before Keith could rightly understand all that he wanted to convey to him. The night was favorable, and the men would all be drunk—except he and Sandy Scot. When therefore Keith was sent for to the captain's cabin he obeyed as quickly as his chains would permit, and thought that he might be advancing the schemes of his friends, whatever they might be.

But it was very far from being any part of Donald Nicol's arrangements that Alan should be hauled up before Admiral Ristack.

CHAPTER XVI.

BOWERS THE SILENT DELIVERS HIS MESSAGE.

St. John's was too busy with her own affairs to pay any attention to John Preedie's unusual equipment of the *Perth*. She had come round from Heart's Delight for certain new nets and appliances for the fisheries. Who cared or noticed whether she took them out or not? St. John's did not love Keith or Plympton. She admired them. They were strong men and prosperous. Heart's Delight was more than a rival of St. John's; it was like a little independent kingdom, that was a standing rebuke to the larger and more important community living under the immediate eye of official government and inspection. The strongest men of Newfoundland somehow drifted to Heart's Delight, and accepted the independent and unofficial government firstly of David Plympton, and latterly of Plympton and Keith.

There was news of trouble between these hardy settlers and the fishing admirals. St. John's rather rejoiced in this, feeling assured that Heart's Delight would not submit as tamely as St. John's had done to the tyranny of the floating magistracy. Beyond this passing thought St. John's gave the news no further consideration. The codfish were crowding into the feeding grounds and that was the one great news of the year, and for the time being St. John's cared for nothing else.

All this favored the easy completion of John Preedie's arrangements. He had got the *Perth* under weigh with incredible speed. She was a trim little vessel. You might call her smack or bark; Keith used to speak of her as his bonnie wee *Perth*. She usually combined in her fishing

service with one or two other Heart's Delight craft working both net and line ; but on this occasion she took on board neither the seine, the cod net, the trap, the gillow, nor the hook and line ; she had a new kind of fishing in view.

If the rival fishermen of St. John's had not been too busy to notice the *Perth*, or so jealous in their rivalry that they were all hurrying up with their own fishing devices, they would have wondered why Mr. John Preedie was taking in cutlasses, muskets, and pistols, not to mention knives and a curious kind of headgear that looked suspiciously like a captain's boarding cap, instead of the customary peaceful instruments of destruction applicable to the seafaring of June or August off Newfoundland.

Nick, the builder, and Damian, the dwarf, had slipped out from Plympton's landing stage in the *Perth's* dingey, while the *Anne of Dartmouth's* men were still hacking away at the hearths and homes of the settlement, and had kept their rendezvous with the eastern men and Bowers the Silent at St. John's.

The *Perth* was well off St. John's when Preedie changed her course. The first idea of the trip had already been suggested. Preedie had resolved to make his own proposals to his comrades outside all possibility of eavesdropping. "Lay her to," he said to Bowers, who was at the helm.

It was a calm night, but with a freshening breeze that favored the new point that Preedie had in his mind. Oddly enough Bowers the Silent had the very same object in his mind, not clearly, but there it was. Preedie had thought out his plan. Bowers, in his lumbering way, had come upon a similar notion, but not intuitively, for he had taken it in with a certain message from Sandy Scot, which he had nursed for the right opportunity of delivery. He had taken joyful note, in his undemonstrative way, of the *Perth's* armament, and had himself carried on board a couple of

axes, remarking to Preedie in the most matter-of-fact way that "mun might be useful." Preedie with equal secretiveness, had said, "Yes, they might." If Preedie had not altered the vessel's course when he did, Bowers would have unbosomed himself. During the ten minutes previously to Preedie's order, Bowers had suffered considerably. He hated to say a word out of season; hated to speak at all, as we know; believed in the eloquence of silence, but he had more than once been on the point of letting his jaw-tackle run before Preedie had spoken, and he knew Preedie must have something special and important to say.

"Mates," began the volunteer captain of the *Perth*, settling himself down in the bows, and the silent man knew, almost as if he looked into Preedie's inmost soul, what he was going to say, "comrades, one and all, I want your attention. Bowers, let her drift, I have something to say."

"Aye, aye," said Bowers, leaning his back against the helm and taking a fresh quid from his leaden tobacco-box.

"I'm sick of things as they stand," said Preedie. "Use, they say, is second nature; well, I suppose it is; we'd never have stood what we have, had it been otherwise; but second nature gets broken down, and the original pluck and courage spring up afresh out of the ruins. What are we? Swine, slaves, cattle, dogs! By the Lord, I tell you I'm sick of it."

"Not more than we are," said the dwarf, squaring his great broad shoulders and turning over a quid that bulged out his weather-beaten cheek. "Hell's tame to what I've suffered in mind this day."

"We are comrades, brothers, men. Let us stand by each other and act for ourselves," said Preedie.

"Why not?" asked the eastern man.

"David Plympton is with us, heart and soul," continued Preedie; "but he is for gathering munitions, buying ships, declaring war so to speak, and all on a fine scale! I've got

his authority to deal for men and ships, and for a right hearty slap at our foes."

"By thunder, that's great; that means joining the Americans, and I'm with you to the death," said the dwarf.

"I'm there," said Nick the builder.

"And me," said Bowers, in response to inquiring glances, "but I goes furder."

"Oh, you do," said the eastern man, laughing, "you always was a dark horse. What is it?"

"When Master Preedie's done," said Bowers.

"Well, this is all I have to say," continued Preedie. "You see yonder cursed sloop with her defiant flag flying, and the ensign of the admiral! look at her! Neither a king's ship nor a pirate, neither an honest fisherman nor a trader—fine lines, tight, trim, a ship any crew might be proud of! Look at her from the point of view of ownership! look at her as a buccaneer! look at her with letters of marque! look at her fighting for freedom, with the new flag of the Stars and Stripes flying fair and free! look at her as your fancy will—what couldn't we make of her? Then look at her as the prison of our comrade and friend, gagged, in irons, torn from his wife and child; what we ought to make of her when she's ours, there's time to consider, but considered from the point of view of Alan Keith's prison, I'm for boarding the prison-ship this night, and giving her a new flag and a new commander. Now, lads, what say you?"

Preedie's speech was received with a dead silence, but it was the silence of resolution. Every man, following the lead of the fisherman from the east coast, extended a strong broad hand to Preedie, who shook each in turn; and Bowers then signified that he had something to say.

"I'm a man of few words, as you know," said Bowers, pulling up his right boot, and turning a capacious quid, to give his tongue full play. "When Father Lavello went

aboard the *Anne*, a red-headed mariner lowers munsen into my boat, and says he, 'Scot's my name, and Scot's my nation; what be you, Bowers?' and I says, 'The same,' says I. 'I'm a friend o' Keith,' says he, and says I, 'I'd follow mun to blazes,' on which says he, 'You knows John Preedie?' and says I, 'Have I ever heard of Tenterden Steeple?' and then he goes on, says he, 'Tell John Preedie to get together a strong crew, muffled oars,' he says, 'and come alongside by the starboard bow, and when he sees a light dropped over the side, just a ship's lantern, mun,' he says, 'why look out for squalls. Ther'll be a ladder with the light; me and two others 'll be ready, and if he swarms right aboard with all arms,' he says, 'the men'll be drunk except me and Nicol, and another or so, and if John Preedie's the same man as I sailed with in the Azores, why, he'll gie the *Anne* a different flag to that what we be groanin' under;' and that's the whull matter."

"Sandy Scot, by Jupiter!" exclaimed Preedie, "and his game's our own."

Bowers relapsed into silence. He had made the one speech of his life. If he had been saving himself up for the effort, during all his years of thoughtfulness at Heart's Delight, he could not have been more successful.

"You've settled it between you," said the eastern man, "and it's been well done; it's not the forlorn hope I made it out two minutes since. Preedie, you've won the right to lead us!"

"Follow me, lads, I ask no more; and, if we live, to-morrow shall give the *Anne* a new captain, and his name is Alan Keith."

CHAPTER XVII.

GRIM OFFERINGS TO THE HOUSEHOLD GODS OF HEART'S DELIGHT.

Donald Nicol's dispositions were shadowed by the sudden resolve of Ristack to have Alan Keith brought before him. He had hoped to release Keith while officers and crew were drinking. One of the ship's boats was floating astern. Released, and on deck, it would not be difficult for Keith to reach it. This was the smaller of Nicol's hopes and plans. The larger one lay in the working of Scot's message to Preedie. Scot knew Preedie, and Scot had no doubt about the due appearance of his former comrade, Hoyland's famous mate. Scot had already moved most of the men's arms from the forecastle, and he had won over a Bristol man, who had also sailed with Preedie.

Everything looked favorable until Ristack ordered up the prisoner Keith.

"We'd best appear just as drunk as the ithers," said Nicol to Sandy, "and be awfu' sober at the reight moment."

Sandy and the Bristol man whispered their "aye-ayes," and Nicol reeled past the mate and another as they conducted Alan to the captain's cabin.

"Keep your feet, prisoner," said Ristack, as Keith attempted to sit, borne down really by the weight of his irons.

With a great effort Keith stood upright.

"I've a message for ye," said Ristack.

Keith wanted to hear it.

"Have ye no tongue in your cursed mouth?" Ruddock asked, stretching out his legs and leaning back in his chair.

"D'ye hear, I'm talking to you?"

"I hear," said Keith, in a hoarse whisper; his voice seemed to have gone with his strength.

"You know Vice Admiral Ruddock, eh?"

Keith bent his head, his blue lips moving nervously, a vague, helpless look in his eyes, all the more forlorn on account of the rough plaster that only partially hid a wound on his forehead.

"And Master Lester Bentz?"

"Yes," said Keith, determined not to give any new occasion of offense to any of them at that time, if possible.

"Very well, drink their healths and the good ship *Anne of Dartmouth*. Hand him a glass, mate; fill it up a bumper."

The mate did as he was ordered and handed the glass to Keith, who took it with a trembling hand.

"Nay, stop," exclaimed Ristack, rising unsteadily and laying his hand on Keith's manacled arm, which only just allowed him to lift the glass to his lips, "no toast, no rum."

Keith remembered the warning he had received from Nicol within the hour—to be hopeful and on the alert. Nevertheless, he was on the point of dashing the glass in Ristack's face when suddenly Nicol staggered into the cabin exclaiming, "Drenk it. Drenk the toast! why of course he'll drenk it and twenty such. Three cheers for the *Anne of Dartmouth!* By the honor of bonnie Scotland, Admiral Ristack is just the grandest master that ever trod a British deck!"

"What in the name of Satan's this? Out you go, you Scotch ragamuffin. I'll put *you* in irons and flog ye, too; d'ye hear?"

"By the heavens above us, ye may yardarm me and I'll shout three cheers for the *Anne o' Dartmouth* and three mair for the Admiral of the Fleet!"

Nicol staggered out as he came, the two admirals smiling, and Bentz remarking, "They say there's truth in drink."

"I'm afeared it's a drunken ship this night," said Ristack. "Mate, see to it. They've won their extra allowance, that's sure; but stop it. And I've a mind to make an example of that man Nicol."

"Aye, sir," said the mate, leaving the cabin, as Keith, unable to resist the drink, emptied the glass.

"A murrain on it. Where's the grog?" said Ristack, looking at Keith. "Did ye pronounce the toast in your throat? Curse me, but I'll hear it. Here, try again."

He handed Keith another glass.

"Now then," said Ristack, "to it."

"A health to you all, gentlemen," said Keith. "Good luck to the *Anne o' Dartmouth*," and he gulped down the liquor.

"Ah, ah," roared Ristack, "I knew ye to be a rank coward, a weak-kneed runagate. Now you shall drink 'good luck' to Master Bentz in his love for Hannah Plympton! By thunder you shall!"

Keith neither moved nor spoke. A little color had come into his pale face, a glint or two of added light into his eyes.

"Stay," said Ruddock. "You will think better of this in the mornin'."

"Yes, yes," said Bentz, also interposing.

"Who stays me?" exclaimed Ristack. "Who?"

He staggered to his feet, took up his knife, and felt the edge of it.

"Don't talk to me, you Bentz," he said with a laugh, and resheathing his knife, as if some new drunken thought had come into his head. "It's all right, you are a wicked devil, you know you are. What's his pretty little plan, do you think?"

He sat down once more, drank another glass of rum, stretched his legs, and rocked his thick, coarse body to and fro with a drunken chuckle.

"I knew you were a coward; and if I promise to let you go—not to-morrow, day after—you'll drink that toast; but it'll be all over then, and you needn't. The lovely Hannah is comin' on board, and a murrain blight all such, say I, lovely or otherwise. Bentz brings her to see her man, and she sees Bentz—ah, ah, ah—curse me if it isn't as good as a play!"

Ristack almost choked himself with laughing. In the midst of his fit, the mate returning, Ruddock motioned to him to remove the prisoner; and so the painful scene was brought to an end. Keith had felt no hurt so keenly as the insult offered to his wife, aggravated by his suppressed rage and passion. But he had noted too keenly the warning of Nicol, and the danger the faithful fellow had run, not to make every possible effort to maintain an appearance of submission. It was clear that his fellow-countryman had some very special hope of rescue, and he would be a bad ally, and a poor general, to augment his friend's risk by any want of self-denial and patience. But as the mate led him away, he ratified, for the hundredth time, his one great oath of vengeance on Ristack and his crew.

"Here, you bo's'n, take your prisoner," said the mate, addressing Keith's jailer.

The boatswain wished Keith at the deuce and the mate too at that moment, and was not a little rough in pushing Alan before him, the prisoner hobbling and cursing in his irons.

"Ah, don't be hard wi' the puir deevil," said Nicol, who had been hovering around the captain's cabin.

"Who are you talking to, you sot!" exclaimed the boatswain, thrusting Nicol aside, the cunning Scotchman reeling with a drunken stagger toward the hold.

"Allri', bo's'n," said Nicol. "No offense, extra grog, cap'n's health!"

"Cursed Scotchman!" said the boatswain, "any excuse to get drunk."

"Ri' you are," said Nicol; "le' me hold the lantern for ye."

Nicol put out his hand and took the lantern, the boatswain willing to be waited upon.

"Hello there, Mark Gowling, where are the men I left here?" he exclaimed, missing his two guardians at the hatchway.

"End their watch; next was comin' on; extra grog," said Nicol. "Le' me bear hand."

"If you're not too drunk," said the boatswain; and the three disappeared.

At the foot of the ladder it was the work of a moment to fell the boatswain, which Nicol did heartily; to gag him was done with equal precision; to bind his arms and legs came still easier.

"Steady," said Nicol to Keith, "don't move; here are the keys."

Keith's irons were unlocked.

"Stretch your legs, my laddie," said Nicol; "are ye a' reight?"

"Yes," said Keith.

"Here's a knife and a pistol; follow me; kick the ladder down as ye leave it. By God! they're at it, man! John Preedie and a boat's crew have come on deck; dinna ye hear the music? Noo, lad, tak the time frae me! It's more than a rescue, it's a prize!"

"Better than all, its vengeance!" Alan exclaimed, as he kicked the ladder away and flung down the hatchway with a bang.

"To the captain's cabin!" exclaimed Nicol.

Keith leapt after his follower, his knife in his hand, murder in his heart.

"To the fo'c'sle, Sandy!" shouted Nicol, as he met his comrade and the Bristol man making for the captain's cabin; "leave the quality to us."

Sandy dashed off with a cry of triumph. The sight of Keith inspired him with a new and tremendous energy. He was equal to any six opponents; and Damian, the dwarf, hewed men down with his ax as if they had been dummies of wood. You could hear his shout and his blows all over the ship.

Nicol flung open the door of the captain's cabin. There had been sudden cries of "A mutiny!" "The Yankees!" "Pirates!" Ruddock, snatching a cutlass from the wall, was making for the deck. Ristack had not realized so quickly as his comrade that some serious trouble had broken out. It was not until pistol shots were heard that he drew himself up and buckled his belt. As Ruddock dashed out of the captain's cabin he fell into the brawny arms of Donald Nicol. The two men gripped each other in a deadly hug.

Almost at the same moment Alan Keith seized Ristack by the wrist close above the handle of the long knife that flashed in the admiral's hand. Lester Bentz crept beneath the admiral's bunk and hid himself in the shadow of Ristack's sea chest.

"You fiend!" exclaimed Alan, with a wild yell of laughter that might have shaken the nerves of a far more valiant man than Ristack, "I've got ye! Ye black-hearted coward! I call the tune now, and, by the Lord! ye shall dance!"

One hand holding his wrist, Alan with the other took his enemy by the throat and shook him until he rattled above the din of the fight that could now be heard on all hands.

Ristack grew purple as if he were choking, and Bentz, at his feet, quivered with a sense of coming dissolution.

"Dinna fear I am gaeing to kill ye. Not yet!" said Alan, who in his hatred of the man was forgetting the inter-

ests of his own brave rescuers and friends. "Ye shall feel what it is to——"

But at this moment Ristack made a desperate lunge forward, and his knife grazed the cheek of his adversary.

Alan dragged the knife from his grasp and flung it aside, at the same time turning the handle of his own weapon that he could hit Ristack with his fist. He hit him fairly and squarely in the face. "Man, I'll nae kill ye! I'll play wi' ye as ye do when ye hae gotten a man i' your power!"

Ristack fell, striking his head against the sea chest and sprawling so near to Bentz that the captain's guest had to compress himself nearly to death by suffocation.

Nicol held no parley with his man. Nor did Ruddock speak. They were too seriously engaged for angry words. Their curses were deep enough, no doubt, but they were unspoken. It was a wrestle to the death. Before Alan Keith had struck his man the vice admiral was flung across the table with a crash of jugs and bottles, and there was a gash in his throat that silenced forever the voice of the ruffian who had undertaken to show Lester Bentz how to woo the belle of Heart's Delight.

Ristack, gaining strength as the effects of the liquor he had drunk wore off in the sudden excitement of battle, struggled once more to his feet.

Alan, with the blade of his knife directed toward him, was about to strike, when once more the passion of revenge provoked him to think of something more terrible than immediate death.

"Nay, ye hellhound, ye shall live!" he exclaimed once more, "until I have time to tell ye to your teeth what ye are; till I've time to kill ye by inches, and sail wi' ye to the Sooth and fling ye alive to the sharks. Oh, I'll get even wi' ye, never fear! Curse ye!"

And again Alan struck Ristack in the face.

"Oot, man," cried Nicol; "ye waste time; kill the deevil, kill him! Hello, ye swine, come oot o' that!"

It was Bentz whom Nicol suddenly espied; but before he could seize him the mate and the chief carpenter came to the aid of the captain's cabin, and Nicol received a shrewd blow from the butt-end of a pistol. As Keith turned to the defense of Nicol, Bentz picked up Ristack's knife and thrust it into his hand. Ristack struggled to his feet, and was about to take full advantage of the mate's diversion when the ax of the dwarf swung in at the open door, and Keith, catching the falling arm of Ristack aimed at his breast, the two fell together. One got up again; it was not Ristack. He lay dead quiet now, and Bentz drew himself into such small compass that he was once more overlooked.

The fight now drifted away from the cabin to the gangway, from the gangway once more to the deck. To Bentz the whole ship was one great scene of riot and butchery. He could, however, draw his breath at last without fear of suffocation. He listened. He heard yells and curses above and below; but they were further away. The admiral's cabin was still as death.

"Admiral Ristack," he whispered.

The admiral made no reply.

"Master Ruddock."

The vice admiral did not answer.

"Lord have mercy on me!" said Bentz.

He tried to move. He was literally barricaded by the body of Ristack. He stretched forth his right hand. I came in contact with the wet face of his host. He knew that his hand was red.

"Ristack," he whispered.

All still.

"Ruddock."

No answer.

"They are dead," he said to himself. "Oh, gracious Heavens, be merciful unto thy servant, a miserable sinner!"

Then the fight seemed to break out afresh. He heard shouts and cries, the clash of steel, and now and then a pistol shot.

"Oh, it's awful—save me, good Lord, for there is none other that fighteth for us but only thou, O God!"

If the wind had not been blowing from the southwest they must have heard the noise of the battle on board the *Pioneer*. As it was the conflict made no disturbance in the direction of the other vessels, and the vice admiral's men, as well as the sailors on the rear admiral's ship, were happily engaged in drinking success to the morrow's fishing.

The attack and capture of the *Anne of Dartmouth* did not occupy more than twenty minutes. To Bentz it was an age. To Keith it was only a second. From the moment that Preedie had scrambled aboard, his knife between his teeth, his boarding cap on his head, with the dwarf at his heels swinging his awful ax, the eastern man with his pike, Bowers with his cutlass, and Nick, the builder, with his pistol, the result was a foregone conclusion. They had Scot and the Bristol men for leaders. Forming two parties they went to work with courage tempered with method. Under the astute direction of Nicol, and with Keith in the fight, the vessel was almost won at the first blow; but not without some desperate fighting. The eastern man fell in the first encounter. He was speedily avenged; but Bowers was literally cut down by the mate, who in his turn fell before Damian's ax.

When the last stand had been made, no officer being left to command, Keith shouted: "Quarter to all who lay down their arms!"

"Agreed!" was the reply of the few still in fighting trim. Immediate attention was given to the wounded.

Nicol collected the arms of the defeated. The prisoners were marched aft under guard.

"Ye'll not be put in irons, men; ye'll be well treated; them as likes to take service under Captain Keith can sign new articles; they that wants to gae ashore can do sae at the first convenient port."

"All right," was the reply of the majority, while two who hated Sandy Scot invited him to go to a certain hot region. Sandy thanked them and asked them meanwhile to accompany the dwarf to the hold. On a manly remonstrance from another of the crew, who was known to be an honest kind of fellow, Sandy said, "Weel, comrade, I'll just leave them on their parole, as the marines say, and mak you responsible for 'em."

"Right," said the other, and the men, worn out with excitement and the fumes of their debauch, flung themselves upon deck in every attitude that promised change and rest for limb and muscle.

The dead being counted it was found that besides Ristack and Ruddock the *Anne of Dartmouth* had lost six men and had five wounded. The attacking party had to regret the eastern man and Bowers, who was now indeed Bowers the Silent. Preedie was badly cut across the face. The dwarf was wounded badly enough to have killed most men, but he made light of it. Neither Nicol nor Keith were hurt, and Sandy Scot counted the loss of a finger, "just as a flea-bite."

"We'll do the best we can for ye," said Keith to the wounded, "until we get ye properly doctored. Your own man doesna appear to be on board."

"He's visiting the doctor on the *Pioneer*," said one of the men.

"I dare say we'll find plaster enough," said Keith, "and mind ye this, we bear ye nae malice; we'll cure ye if we can.

"And now, lads, we'll go on deck and drink a measure to

Heart's Content," said Keith, "and anither to Donald Nicol and Sandy Scot!"

"Aye, aye," shouted the little crew, some of them binding up their wounds, others stretching their arms and muscles as if from relief from the strain of the fight.

The steward having consented to wait upon the visitors, grog was liberally served. After Heart's Content had been drunk and the names of Nicol and Scot duly toasted, John Preedie proposed that Alan Keith should be elected captain, and that the *Anne* should be called the *Avenger*.

The cheers which indorsed Master Preedie's proposition were heard against the wind on board Admiral Ruddock's ship, the *Pioneer*, whose chief mate, listening to the cheery shout, remarked that the Admiral of the Fleet was giving his men a regular old Devonian debauch.

"And now, dear friend," said Keith, when he and Preedie presently sat together aft while Master Bentz prayed for his life and obtained it at the cost of his liberty, and the men were busy, under the direction of Nicol, now chief mate, "what of Heart's Content?"

"No news is good news," said Preedie, "and your sweet wife was alive when I left."

"Alive!" said Alan in an anxious whisper.

"She had been sick, as you know."

"Nay, I didna," said Alan.

"I hope she is better," said Preedie.

"I must see her," said Alan, "at any risk."

"I will not say ye nay, for my part."

"Bear wi' me, friend; I'll be worthy o' your trust and faith. 'Twould be wise to up-anchor and out to sea, anyway. There's like to be cruisers at St. John's. We maun have sea room to overhaul and clear decks. When we're rid o' the men we dinna want, and wha dinna want us, I ken a harbor that's made for us!"

At about midnight the wind came out fair and the moon

appeared fitfully. Now and then it would struggle through a gray cloud, and for a moment make a weird reflection upon the sea. Between the lights, as if by arrangement, a group of men on the lower deck amidships, on the starboard side, with low cries of "Steady, mates," and "Now, boys, ready," and so on, flung grim and weighty things into the sea.

"Let 'em float or let 'em sink," remarked Dymoke, the Lincolnshire sailor, "I reckon we've declared oursens. Accordin' to the law, to resist authority on board ship's mutiny—to resist and win, why that's piracy; so let 'em float or let 'em swim, our flag flies free!"

"But they're to have Christian burial; our ain men, God rest 'em," said Sandy Scot. "It brakes my heart to think o' that gude man Bowers the Silent lyin' low."

As the last of the dead men were flung out into the sea, the cry of "All hands! up anchor! ahoy!" rung out in the strong full voice of the new boatswain. The men responded with a will. Sails were lowered, yards braced, and the anchor was raised with a cheerful "heave ho." Alan Keith stood upon deck, his eyes turned toward a distant star, poised, as he thought, right over the spot where Hannah and their boy David were encamped.

The first morning of the fishing broke calm and fair and full of happy promise. The caplin were racing before the swarming cod, and making every now and then a splash of silvery brightness upon the blue waters as they leaped forward under the pressure of the hunt. Along the shore in many punts the poorer folk were luring the fish with rival baits. In the middle distance hundreds of heavily manned boats were merrily at work with hook and line. As far as the eye could range seaward along the banks white sails were seen, as if a fleet of British yachts had met for sport, as they meet in our day at Cowes. Here and there among the boats that rose and fell in a quiet undulating and easy fashion, brown-winged skiffs glided to and fro.

It was a bright, inspiriting scene. So busy was it that not until the doctor of the *Anne* mentioned to the mate his desire to go on board his own ship to breakfast was the *Anne* missed. The lookout could report nothing. The mate, with the ship's most powerful glass, could see no signs of her, though he swept the horizon as it were inch by inch, yard by yard. He could not even see what fate had left by way of token of the lost ship.

The sea, however, seemed conscious of its load. Two bodies were floating into the harbor of Heart's Delight. There was Ruddock, with his gold chain and his showy jerkin ; Ristack in his boots, his belt tight and trim. Ruddock was first in the journey shoreward ; Ristack was no longer in a position to resent Ruddock's presumption. Ruddock, on the other hand, was incapable of rejoicing in his promotion to the front. They were not far apart. The sea appeared to understand them. It gave Ristack a decoration, as if to make him equal to the man with the gold chain. The admiral wore a crown of seaweed. Ruddock floated with a certain motion of defiance. His head seemed to sway about, as if in egotistical deprecation of his fellow-admiral. Ristack lumbered along with a sense of his questioned importance. Caplin and cod rushed past them, chased and chasing. As the tide, with a swirl, made for the entrance to the harbor of Heart's Delight, in full view of the great house which was to be furnished for the Admiral of the Fleet, lo and behold, Admiral Ristack and his friendly coadjutor, Vice Admiral Ruddock, bumped up against the sea-beat piles of Plympton's boathouse, where the receding tide left them, grim offerings of fate to the household gods of Heart's Delight.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRAGIC REVOLT OF ALAN KEITH.

Between the uninhabited island of Nasquappe and Demon's Ridge, on the northern coast of Labrador, lies the sheltered harbor of Wilderness Creek, of which Alan Keith had frequently spoken in his talks with Master Plympton about the future of Newfoundland.

At the main entrance from the sea the waves thunder in among bowlders and solid rock. The noise of the breakers as they pound the iron coast can be heard far out to sea. The exit is a narrow outlet protected by steep cliffs that shelter it from the northern rollers. I speak of entrance and exit advisedly, for either way and both are open for those who choose to enter. Alan Keith, piloting in the *Avenger*, was the first ship's master who had ever dared to seek the shelter and repose of this secret and almost unknown harbor. The reader will remember how Keith had described its capacity to his neighbor and father-in-law. He had not, however, dreamed that he might one day drop an anchor there for such a ship as the *Anne of Dartmouth* after such an adventure as that of her capture and change of name. "Women like to change their names," Keith had remarked, "and this trull o' Ristack's is honored in her new one, and by all the saints she shall be the virago o' these northern watters." Between the entrance from the sea and the exit was this bay, of which Alan had spoken, lying as still and glassy as a land-locked lake. No kind of weather made any difference in its calm serenity. Salt as the outer ocean, it was a perfect mirror to the surrounding rocks, and it

repeated in its vast depths the ribbed sea sand that fringed its silent margin.

On one hand the harbor was bordered by a sandy beach strewn with bowlders that climbed up among the foothills of a tall promontory known by the mariner far and wide as a time-honored warning of danger. On the other hand the shore was a wilderness of jagged rock and stony hollows, a land of salty barrenness dotted with stunted growths of underwood and bracken, the home of sea birds and other more fearsome fowl in the shape of imps and fiends of the pit, according to well-approved tradition. In spring Wilderness Creek was accessible ; and to him it was a land of promise and fair weather.

The promontory was called Demon's Rock. It had, at times of storm and tempest, cast its awful shadow over sailors wrecked at the very entrance of the unknown harbor, into which their broken ships with daring helmsmen at the wheel might have been steered, and defied the wildest storm ; but this coast of Labrador was to the general voyager a God forgotten region. None suspected it of the possibilities which had struck Alan Keith in his first fishing cruise among its strange and dangerous waters. At the base of Demon's Rock was a wide-mouthed cavern. Its entrance was a kind of natural hallway ; it might have been the approach to some giant's castle.

Penetrating its depths you soon became conscious of a light like a star shining afar off. Then your level path was impeded by an obstruction of rock and shingle. This was only the first of many natural ridges of rock, steps that led to the light, which was an outlet from the cavern into the opening country beyond. Alan Keith had climbed this stairway, and following a narrow, shingly trail, had eventually come upon a stretch of pleasant country, where the berry-bearing plants of the peninsula of Labrador grew in great variety. They consisted of partridge berries,

whortleberries, wild currants, and gooseberries, and as Keith had made his most notable excursion in the autumn, he had become acquainted with the horticultural riches of Labrador when most he could appreciate them. Mosses of many colors, ferns, tall grasses, and wild flowers made this oasis in the desert a little garden of paradise in summer, and there were days even in the severest winter when the air was dry and exhilarating, and the skies a bright and lovely blue. Traveling a mile or two further afield, Keith had found himself at the head of one of the fiords of the district, bounded with noble forest trees, while game was as abundant as the most ardent hunter could desire. Here he had seen an encampment of Micmacs ; but both Indians and Esquimaux appeared to be as shy of Wilderness Creek as the navigators of the sea. It is true there was a trail from the cave of Demon's Rock that came eventually upon the little paradise of berry plants and flowers, but it was vague and uncertain, and had no appearance of recent use. Keith, judging from Plympton's information relating to the old country's troubles with the French, came to the conclusion that this trail was a relic of the earliest inhabitants of those latitudes, used afterward by the Micmacs, who had, during their incursions, annihilated the unwarlike aborigines, to become themselves victims to the dominant race. The Micmacs were from Cape Breton and Novia Scotia. They were more or less allies of the French, and were supposed to have invaded the island in their interests ; but the chief antipathies of the Micmacs appear to have been exercised against the aborigines, whom they slew or starved out of existence. The Micmacs established fishing and hunting grounds, and increased and multiplied, but only for a time. The latest historical incident connected with their settlement in Newfoundland is connected with the governorship of Sir Thomas Duckworth, who in 1810 was appointed commander-in-chief of the island of Newfound-

land and the islands adjacent, including those of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and all the coast of Labrador, from the River St. John's to Hudson's Straits, and the island of Anticosti and others adjacent, made a voyage which extended to the principal northern settlements and also to the little known country of Labrador. In the latter region he addressed a proclamation to the Micmacs, Esquimaux, and others, assuring them of the protection of the king. He further exhorted them to live peaceably together and avoid all causes of violence and bloodshed. He took great interest in the Indians of Newfoundland, and opened communications with a tribe on the Exploits River. Here with an expedition of 130 men he induced four Indians to go away with him, leaving two marines as hostages. The Indians were to return with presents and pledges of peace. They did return with their escort, to find the two marines brutally murdered, their bodies bristling with arrows. The English interest in the Indians since that time has no doubt been equally sincere, but in our day Newfoundland has buried the last of the Micmacs. Had the home governments of the time shown anything like a sympathetic interest in the English settlers, the fishery and other claims of France would have been just as completely laid at rest.

In the early days of his courtship of Hannah Plympton, and after their happy marriage, Alan Keith had speculated upon the advantages of a settlement hereabouts, with such winter arrangement of stores and provisions as would make the ice and snow as welcome as the summer sun and shower. He had in his mind that safe and sheltered harbor of Wilderness Creek for the laying up of ships and boats locked in with icy bergs, and yet sheltered from the belt of Northern storms of sleet and snow, a veritable retreat from the influences of envy and free from the attacks of avarice. Plympton had smiled at his stories of the place, knowing the character it bore, and having had in days gone by some

experience of its danger and its icy gales. As for Wilderness Creek affording an entrance for anything larger than a cockleboat, Plympton paid tribute to Alan's seamanship in questioning if any other Newfoundland fisherman would risk a smack in the attempt. Any comparison between Wilderness Creek and St. John's, where a chain was drawn across the gate-like entrance to the harbor, was out of the question, seeing that you entered St. John's from the open sea, while Wilderness Creek was approached through waterways beset with hidden rocks, by shoals, and deviltries of all kinds, the creek itself acting as a sucker to drag a boat to destruction. Plympton contended that Alan must have found some other course than that of Wilderness Creek; but Alan knew that the father of Heart's Delight emphasized his objections to Labrador because he loved the settlement that was his home; and Alan, finding the Northern coast and its inland country so much better than its reputation, was inclined to paint it in exaggerated colors. He had not, however, done Wilderness Creek and its lonely harbor any more than justice. It is true he was a skillful navigator, but he was more, he was both wise and cautious. He had made a regular sailing chart of the course into Wilderness Creek, and had sailed his smack over it in all weathers, after and before the fishing. Spring and early autumn were the seasons when he best knew the rock-strewn coast, and he had declared to his father-in-law that the way into the creek was "as safe as a canal."

If only Plympton had listened with faith to Alan, or Alan had acted upon the instinctive alarm of Plympton as to the future of Newfoundland, what happiness might have been in store for them and for Hannah and the infant, David Keith, whose young life, which had begun with promise of fair weather, was now beset with perilous storm and tempest.

Not even the romantic and fiery Scotchman's bitterest enemy could have invented the sad and dreary circum-

stances under which he came to seek the protection of Wilderness Creek. His first daring act of reckless courage and loving devotion, after the sanguinary vengeance he and his comrades had taken upon the *Anne of Dartmouth*, was to seek the new settlement of Heart's Content.

At a point or two beyond the neck of land which had run out into the sea like a sheltering arm of comfort to Heart's Delight, Keith had landed in the disguise of his stubble beard and haggard face, supplemented with some unfamiliar garments found on board Ristack's ship, and had made his way to Back Bay Valley, only to find his worst fears fulfilled. He stood on the fringe of the little cemetery, that had been marked out by reverent hands, to witness its inauguration with all that remained of the sweet and angelic woman who had blessed him with her wifely companionship and was the mother of his infant son.

He knew, the moment that he set foot in the new settlement, that the rough pine coffin covered with wild flowers enshrouded the woman of all others in the world whom it seemed to him the Almighty might have spared, not for him alone, but for the good of all creation—too good and beautiful, he knew, for so worldly and coarse a comrade as himself, but one whom he could worship as a type of all that was heavenly, sweet, and true.

He stood on the outskirts of the sorrowful crowd, and joined speechless, yet with all his aching heart and soul, in the holy service that Father Lavello read and chanted over the coffin and the flowers. He listened to the priest's eloquent prophecy of bliss for her holy spirit. Alan did not murmur a single word of prayer or hope, but the tears fell down his sunken cheeks, heavy drops of agony. He had not the heart to speak to a soul then or thereafter, but he allowed them to go away—his father-in-law Plympton, the good priest, Pat Doolan, Sally, the nurse, and the rest of his friends and companions.

When night came he crept to the spot where they had laid her, and fell upon his face. "Oh, just Heaven! give her back to me!" he cried. "Mother of God, what hae I dune to be sae afflicted?" The leaves rustled in the trees, and a night bird called to its mate. "Dear wife—sweetheart, if I could only have held ye in my arms and said good-by—a sma' mercy that, God knows!" Then he groveled by the grave, and prayed that he might pass away there and end his woes forever. When the dews of morning mingled their tears with his he kissed the wet earth that lay soft and tearful above her, and went his way another man: not the chastened sinner, intent on making himself worthy to meet her in heaven. All the good that was in him, when her voice was heard in the land, seemed to fall away from him as he strode out for the beach where his boat was lying. He was once more the avenger, his soul tossed upon a sea of passion. The soul of Nero had entered his bosom, untempered even by one single thought of his child. It was strange that his love for Hannah should not have made him keenly sensible of that legacy of her love; but, losing her, the great world of good was a blank.

A natural sympathy with religious hopes and fears might have made him thoughtful of the things that Hannah might have liked him to do, had she been able to guide him with her human aspirations. But it was as if the devil had taken possession of him. Had Father Lavello, being an unusually enlightened priest for those days, been consulted upon Keith's state of mind, he would have proceeded to exorcise the fiend that had entered into the body of his otherwise honest and manly parishioner at Heart's Content. Keith had given Back Bay Valley this name of happy augury, but it cast no sunny light upon his soul; it only breathed to him of the direst misfortune on account of which in his madness he conceived himself entitled to the direst ven-

geance even upon those who had had no hand in the misery that had befallen him.

Without a word to any living soul he left the new-made grave, and strode away to the rendezvous where his boat awaited him. Plympton would hardly have known his familiar friend, had he met him bending his way along unaccustomed forest paths, breaking through tangled jungle, now bursting out upon stretches of open shore and shingle, a gaunt giant, pressing forward on some tremendous mission.

Pride in an angel made the first devil. Unrequited love has changed gentle natures to bloody murderers. Misfortune will make a hell of a veritable paradise. Injustice and misfortune, twin spoilers of happy homes, had turned all that was great and good and pure in Alan Keith's nature to gall and wormwood, to sour and bitter, to deviltry and debauch.

Not alone under the curse of the fishing admirals, but under the vengeful action of Alan Keith, both Heart's Delight and Heart's Content became a desolation of justice and revenge. Troops from the garrison of St. John's marched upon Heart's Content and took away David Plympton, Patrick Doolan, and three other settlers on charges of high treason. They were put on board a war ship that had come round in defense of the fisheries to be met with the tokens of revolt that Heart's Delight and the Rear Admiral of the Fishing Fleet had found in the mutilated bodies of Ristack and Ruddock, grim and ghastly lodgers in the ooze that rankled round the piles of Plympton's boathouse and fish stage. The settlement of Heart's Delight being already broken up, its humble homes in ruins, the Governor of St. John's, stimulated by the hope of distinction and reward, concluded to root out the settlement whose traitorous founders had been known to express sympathy with the rebellious colonists, and who were suspected on reliable evidence of

leaguing with the mutineers of the *Anne of Dartmouth.* The disappearance of John Preedie, the Eastern man, Bowers the Silent, Damian, the dwarf, Dick, the builder, and others the most resolute of the men of Heart's Delight, was a sufficient vindication of the action of St. John's.

It was in many ways an historic and tragic season, the fishing that last saw the admirals in full and uncontrolled authority on the coasts and settlements of Newfoundland ; and, in spite of watchful cruisers, which had plenty to do to hold the English commerce of the seas from the ravages of hostile fleets, the *Pioneer* and her consort, with his rear admiral's ensign flying, were captured and burnt, the light of their oily cargoes, the fiery flakes of their flaming ropes and tackle illuminating the desolated shores of Heart's Delight. The crews, stripped of everything they possessed, were allowed to put off in boats unarmed and unprovisioned, all except the Rear Admiral of the Fleet, who was hanged at his own yardarm, where he swung to and fro in the fire until he fell, a crackling mass, into the sea.

But the booty which Alan Keith promised his comrades had yet to come, and come it did with startling rapidity. He was no respecter of nationalities ; he was a Yankee when it pleased his fancy, and a Britisher when most he honored a foreign foe. The ship in which he achieved his greatest victories, or, as the home government would have described them, his worst outrages, was the *St. Dennis*, a French sloop of war of thirty guns. The capture was made a few leagues away from the northernmost point of Labrador. The *Avenger*, in response to the Frenchman's salute, hoisted the Stars and Stripes. The Frenchman put off a boat, and invited the Yankee to come aboard. Alan Keith accepted the invitation. He related something of his grievances against the mother country, and showed the papers with which Plympton had intrusted Preedie. The Frenchman was hilarious over the successes he had already won at sea

in attacks on British commerce, and Alan Keith gave vent to his aspirations for the freedom of the colonies and his glory in the new flag of liberty. Furthermore, Alan spoke of his capture and burning of the fishing ships, and the Frenchman explained and advocated the rightful claims of his country to all the fishing grounds of Newfoundland and to the entire island itself. Keith found it rather difficult to sympathize with his host in regard to the French pretensions to Newfoundland, having listened to many a gallant yarn of Plympton's in which French attacks had been gloriously defeated against overwhelming odds. Nevertheless he drank the ship's wine, praised her prowess, and expressed a hope that France and America would divide between them the great New World.

One of the Frenchman's prizes was a Bristol merchantman, fairly armed and considered safe to hold her own, having on board considerable treasures of gold and precious stones; but in an evil hour she had been compelled to ship in a foreign port a fresh crew who had not the courage of Western men in face of spiteful odds and powerful guns; and so the best of her cargo was on board the Frenchman.

When Alan Keith returned to the *Avenger* he held a council of war and strategy, and laid before his officers and men a plan of surprise which should give them not only booty, but a new ship with which they might hope to meet a certain British vessel, reported by a Yankee scout to be on her way with specie to pay the English troops at Boston.

The captain of the Frenchman accepted the return courtesy of the rebel, and it was agreed that the two ships should cruise in company and support each other in any operation that might make such alliance desirable.

Keith had no sentiment of the sacred rights of hospitality. It mattered nothing to him that he had broken bread with the Frenchman, the Frenchman with him; all was fair or foul, he cared not which so that he achieved his end.

Indeed, he did not stop to consider what was fair or foul in love or war; and he had infused the same devilish spirit into his men.

It blew a gale the next day, and Keith allowed his ship to get into difficulties. She would not answer her helm; the helmsman took care that she should not, except to let her drift upon the Frenchman in such a way that the booms and rigging of the two vessels became sufficiently entangled for carrying out the infamous plot of the English commander. When the Frenchman was most engaged in helping his ally, Keith's crew, armed to the teeth, suddenly sprang upon the unsuspecting Frenchman's deck, and almost without a blow made prize of the rich and splendidly equipped cruiser.

Dismantling his own guns, removing such stores as might be useful on the prize, crippling the *Avenger* either for offense or defense, the foreigners were transferred to the now discarded ship on board of which Admiral Ristack had sailed into the peaceful harbor of Heart's Delight.

The change from one ship to the other was not made without some trouble, not to say danger, for the men of the *St. Dennis* far outnumbered those of the *Avenger*, and in the midst of the operation the lookout announced "a strange sail," and in his next breath pronounced her "a three-decker." Keith took the glass himself, and indorsed the correctness of the lookout's vision.

"Noo, my lads, cast off the mossoos! Is that the last boat?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Let her go."

"She's away, sir," was the answer, as the *Avenger's* whale boat plunged into the foam and made for the *St. Dennis*, that was lying to somewhat uncomfortably, the wind still blowing half a gale.

"Noo, Scot," shouted Alan, "see if the Frenchman under-

stands ye as well as the ship ye've just left. Hard up with your helm! We'll show the stranger a clean pair o' heels. She carries a real old British vice admiral's flag, and has three rows of teeth just as angry as a shark's. Head up, man! What ails ye? Now, Nicol, my son, all hands, pack on all sail! From royal to stunsail. Handy, man! It's cursed strange if a French cruiser doesna answer her helm when it's to run before the foe! That's it. Cheerily, my lads, and now for Wilderness Creek with extra grog and a division of booty!"

The *Avenger* slopped up and down in the foaming waters, waiting to see the capture of their treacherous enemy, and the great mountainous Britisher came on under a heavy pressure of canvas on her trip of inquiry and investigation. Alan Keith had not deigned to answer her signals; he had made up his mind to get away from her.

"It's no dishonor, lads," he said, "to show this vice admiral our stern, all the mair that we dinna yet understand our French lassie's ways. By ——, lads, she's coming down upon us; we'll barely clear her broadside if she delivers it. Ah, ah, he kens we'll do it!"

It was a narrow escape, for the mighty hail of lead hurtled past them. It seemed as if the *St. Dennis* had herself caught the scent of danger and was willing to fly. The next moment, bending before the wind that filled every sail, she fairly bounded over the waves, her course dead on toward Demon's Rock.

The warship gave chase, and sent a shot or two in the wake of the cruiser to keep the game alive, but the *St. Dennis* had gradually drawn out of range. Then the enemy maneuvered smartly, for so large a vessel, to come by the wind and lay the retreating ship once more under her guns, evidently expecting the *St. Dennis* to change her course, which otherwise must land her upon the rocks of Labrador. Several of Keith's own men, in whispers, questioned the

wisdom of trying to make Wilderness Creek in such a gale. They had made their first entrance through the rocky waterways in fine weather. The dangers were sufficiently apparent then, but now, with the clouds so heavy that it was difficult to say which was sea and which sky, and with a ship that was new to them, even Donald Nicol questioned the wisdom of his chief in steering for the secret harbor.

"Better die fighting our ship than broken to bits on the rocks," said Nicol.

Keith heard the remark. It was intended for him. He paid no attention to it. While he issued his orders as calmly as if he were piloting a yacht on a calm and sunny lake, he watched intently the chasing ship.

"She leaves us to our fate," he said presently to Preedie, who stood by his side. "Ah, ah! my lads, she quits the chase. By the honor o' bonnie Scotland, if she'd raked us once we'd been lost!"

The commander of the three-decker was not to be tempted beyond the line of safe navigation. He lay to and watched the cruiser as she pelted on her way to what not he alone, but safer mariners on board the flying ship, regarded as her sure and unavoidable destruction.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MYSTERIES OF WILDERNESS CREEK.

Apart from the natural dangers of that part of the coast which was dominated by Demon's Rock, mariners had other reasons for giving the waters of Wilderness Creek a wide berth. Grim and forbidding as are the thousand miles of the Atlantic coast of Labrador, the region which included Nasquappe and Wilderness Creek was a concentration of its horrors. During countless ages the frosts and storms of winter, like untiring sculptors, have been carving the rocks into fantastic shapes, nowhere more strange and weird than where they guard the navigable current that Keith had discovered.

Borne on the winds from this area of Nasquappe, sailors off Labrador heard in the air, and on the tops about the masts, a great clamor of voices, confused and mixed, such as you may hear from a crowd at a fair or in a market place; whereupon they knew that the Island of Demons was not far away. In the old charts it is marked with devils rampant, having horns and tails.

The sailors of those days had woeful privileges that do not belong to their successors. They had seen the Flying Dutchman beating round Cape Horn. They had seen the phantom ship of the Cornish wrecker in cloudy squalls sailing over sea and land; the Scotch "Meggie of the Shore," with her visions of spectral boats that were doomed; and

> The specter ship of Salem, with the dead men in her shrouds,
> Sailing sheer above the water in the looming moving clouds.

They had seen the demons of the storm, the mermaid with her comb and glass, the sea serpent with his fiery eyes; they had spoken dead men's ghosts.

With the legends of the Labrador coast they mixed stories that were half the truth, and traditions that hold their place in poetry and romance. Whittier, the American poet, tells of a phantom ship which mariners a hundred years ago would swear to. The young captain of the schooner visited the Labrador coast, where in a secluded bay lived two beautiful sisters with their Catholic mother—both fell in love with the handsome skipper, who, however, was devoted to the younger of the two. She was shut up in her room by the mother just at the moment when she had arranged to meet her lover and fly with him. Her elder sister, profiting by her absence, went in her place and was carried out to sea in the skipper's vessel. On learning, the deception that had been practiced upon him, he returned to find his sweetheart dead, and no more in life was seen of the skipper or his ship.

> But even yet at Seven-Isle Bay
> Is told the ghastly tale
> Of a weird unspoken sail.
> She flits before no earthly blast,
> With the red sign fluttering from her mast,
> The ghost of the schooner *Breeze*.

A noted legend of the adjacent Belle Isle was told in fo'c's'le yarns in the days of which I am speaking; how Roberval had put on shore from his fleet the Lady Marguerite, niece of the then Viceroy of New France, and her lover, whose conduct had scandalized him during the voyage out from home. He selected for their punishment the Island of Demons. Here the unhappy pair were attacked by the fiends. The sailors could tell you how many of them there were, and the particular form of their horns and tails, and the horrid grin of their fiery jaws; and they could

tell you of the whiteness and purity of the band of saints that came to the aid of the penitent lovers. But even these heaven-sent messengers could not save the father nor the child; both died within a few days, leaving the Lady Marguerite alone in the terrible wilderness. One day the smoke of a fire attracted some fishermen on a bright, calm day; they ventured to land on the haunted island, and there they found the unhappy woman, and rescued her after she had lived among the fiends of Demon's Isle upward of two years.

These stories, and many still more startling mysteries of the deep and its haunted coasts, the sailors of the sea knew by heart. But they knew nothing of the realities of Wilderness Creek. The fishermen who, in the brief summer months, carried off the harvests of the Labrador coast had not the remotest idea of tempting the demons of Nasquappe or the adjacent islands by a trip beyond the boundaries of their fish stakes and landing stages. For years and years, with the first signs of autumn, the fishermen from France and Italy, from America and the West of England had sailed home with their scaly treasures, some to be caught by hostile cruisers, some to go to the bottom, perhaps, the larger proportion fortunately to find welcoming hands at ancient jetties and in picturesque seaports.

When the *St. Dennis*, dashing into the broken waters that were white with foam one moment, black the next with the shadows of forbidding rocks, had in the hands of her daring pilot sailed into Wilderness Creek and found rest in the still, calm harbor, it was found that one of her company was missing. He had either remained on board the *Avenger* with the Frenchmen or had been drowned. Keith concluded that he had not met the latter fate, seeing that he must have been born to be hanged. This person was no other than Lester Bentz, whose life had been spared at the intercession of Preedie that he might be made the

drudge and butt of the ship. There was more vengeance in keeping him alive under such circumstances, Preedie argued, than in giving him the quiet rest of the grave ; and so Bentz had been spared, but only for what he conceived to be a living death, seeing that every day he expected Keith to cut him down or have him swung to the yardarm as he had seen the Rear Admiral of the Fishing Fleet swing above the fire. When, therefore, the opportunity came for a change of masters, Bentz hid himself in the hold of Ristack's unfortunate ship, and presently made friends with the mossoos, who were taken in tow by the three-decker *St. George*, and carried to Halifax.

The *St. George* had given up her chase of Keith only when it led to shoals and rocks that were more dangerous than batteries of guns or the boarding pikes. She lay to off Labrador the next day, and, the weather having moderated, sent a boat of search for bodies or other signs of wreck and disaster. The officer returned, having nothing to report beyond the well-known inaccessibility of the coast and its dangers.

When the *Anne of Dartmouth* made for Wilderness Creek after her emancipation from the command of Ristack, Bentz, by order of Preedie, had been confined to the hold, where he had remained until the ship was once more out at sea; but he had heard sufficient in the undisguised talk of the crew to enable him to give valuable information to the English admiral. His lordship, however, only regarded the revelations of Bentz as to an inland lake and a calm channel, thereto as a sailor's yarn. No attempt was made to test the truth of his romantic story.

Bentz being missed, Keith at once had the entrance to Wilderness Creek barred with chains ; and a similar precaution was taken in regard to the exit of the harbor. This accomplished he and his crew settled down to rest and for mutual counsel and recreation. The season was unusually

mild. As a rule, the snow lies over Northern Labrador from September until June. In this year of Keith's exploits September had come in mild and genial, with lovely autumn tints ashore and only moderate gales at sea. The wind that had filled the sails of the *St. Dennis* was almost the first gale of the autumn. It had been succeeded by a spell of fair weather. The season was indeed so unusually mild that it enabled them to explore the surrounding country, and in that garden of berries which Keith had discovered in his first wanderings about the coast they built a log house and cleared the land around it for cultivation. It was only the work of a week to make the place habitable; and here Keith and Preedie and Nicol and Scot, and occasionally others of the crew came, to drink their grog and smoke and quaff the Frenchman's wine as they talked over their plans for the future.

The days went by pleasantly enough, and knowing the history of their recent exploits it might have surprised any looker-on to see how easily the men amused themselves, to hear the genial songs they sung, and to listen to their yarns and stories of adventure. There was one old fellow of whose tales Keith never tired. He had been mate to a pirate captain with headquarters at Salem. No one in the quaint old town pretended to suspect his chief and owner, who lived in a many-gabled house overlooking the bay, and with a garden full of vegetables and flowers. The pirate had a wife, a shrew with her tongue and a cat with her claws; and when the ship put into Salem she would have the crew go up to the house to dig and weed; "and it would have done your heart good, sir, to have seen that worthy old dame in command. By the Lord, sir, we were more afeard of her angry eye than all the hard words the captain gave us. We dug and slaved at that garden like any niggers; every time we came ashore there was a new piece of land to bring under cultivation; they says a pirate's

heartless and free, but give him a female skipper on shore and see what she can make of the toughest of us ! "

It was a standing joke with Keith to mimic the Salem dame and order the crew to dig, even though they had no spades to tame the wilderness, and he was as pleased as a child when the carpenter brought along half a dozen home-made spades and half a dozen of the crew went to work with them.

This " idle waste of time," as Donald Nicol called it, was not, however, allowed to interfere with the taking of every precaution for the full and complete protection of the ship. Although it was not likely that they would have to meet any attack from the land, Keith had huts built for sentinels commanding the outlet from Demon's Rock ; and a post of observation was established on the eastern side of the harbor, where the sea birds had for centuries played the part of flying fiends and demons in the superstitious and fictitious history of the coast of Labrador.

CHAPTER XX.

ONE FRIEND AND MANY FOES.

KEITH had hoped to make one more trip before laying up for the winter. But he had a comrade's consideration for his men. They had behaved splendidly, even when most they had reason to doubt his seamanship, and he was anxious not only to keep faith with them to the letter, but to give them what he called "a reight gude merrie time." They had signed articles of the most stringent if generous character. They were similar to those which Preedie had signed in the days of Hoyland. Every man had a vote in affairs of the moment, had an equal title to liquors and rations in times of pressure; prize money was to be shared in proportions laid down, with proper regard to position and wages, from the captain to the humblest soul on board; games of dice or cards for money were prohibited; lights were to be out at fixed times; no woman was allowed on board; all weapons were to be kept in clean and perfect order; no quarrel was to be settled with arms on board; dueling was discountenanced, and could only take place with the captain's permission, and then the meeting must be on shore; desertion in time of battle was to be punishable with death, equal severity to be meted out for the crime of robbery; no man to retire from the service until his share of booty amounted to at least one thousand pounds; injuries to the person in the service to be compensated out of the common stock. The sum of a thousand pounds apiece had already been earned by the capture of the *St. Dennis*, after the officers had received their proportionate shares, the captain taking three, and the subordinate

officers two, and one and a quarter. The men of the *Anne of Dartmouth*, who had signed articles with the rest, were more than content, and they were devoted to their new captain.

The division of the spoil, the surveying of the ship, the excursions ashore, the gardening, the councils of war, and the extra nights of grog and merriment made the time go as quickly as it was pleasant. At the end of the month, and on the eve of serious thoughts of a last brief cruise before the winter should set in, the wind changed, and the snow came down in a blinding storm that was followed by keen frosts and icy blasts, such as made it a very risky thing to engage in any further enterprises until the spring. It was argued by some that inaction for six months would demoralize the crew. Preedie suggested that it might be well to lift anchor and lay up at Salem, or even in the harbor of New York, where they could ship the extra hands necessary to the complete manning of their new vessel. But Keith, with a lively faith in the strength of England, while he was willing to war against her, hinted that neither Salem nor any other American port might he safe. Furthermore, the Americans would consider their capture of the *St. Dennis* an act of piracy in a flag flying the Stars and Stripes. As for a cruise in the Southern seas (also proposed by Preedie), he was for letting well alone ; it was in these latitudes that it should most satisfy them all to make their power felt. To meet the question of inaction, he planned out a continual fight with winter to keep open a track to the garden hut, and moreover, there was plenty of work to be done in adapting the *St. Dennis* to their own tastes and requirements. He was for settling down into winter quarters in the harbor of Wilderness Creek.

While these matters were being discussed, winter intervened with barriers that left no option whether the ship should sail or not. The master of the frost and snow

drew his strong chains across both entrance and exit. The harbor was a little sea of ice. Jagged rock and shining bowlder were fringed with shining beads and pendants. Bergs began to form in the waterways outside the creek. Captain and crew accepted the inevitable, and for such a company they passed the time in very wholesome fashion, fighting the snow and ice and putting the ship into perfect repair, making hardy trips of sport with gun and trap, and living a life of activity, only now and then debased by a debauch of drink and ribald songs, in which Keith would join with a wild, uncontrollable energy. He had, nevertheless, fits of despair, days and nights of speechless depression followed by an unnatural activity. His cheeks grew thinner and thinner, his aspect more and more gaunt. In appearance he had put on a premature old age. Only half through the allotted span of man, he was worn and wrinkled as any patriarch. His sunken eyes had nevertheless the brilliancy of youth. They sparkled in their cavernous depths. His thin hands were strong as eagles' claws. A long, drooping mustache, worthy of a Norseman's visage, mingled with his straggling beard, white and brown—a mixture of youth and age. His dress was picturesque in its careless commonness : a worn and ragged leather jerkin, baggy trousers, high brown boots, a broad buckled belt with knife and pistols, and a slouching hat of felt which was worn on the back of his head, leaving the thin, expressive face open to sun and storm, defiant, wild, vengeful. He might have been made of iron, so little did he regard or fear hardships of sport or march, of sleepless nights and days of perilous work and hard.

In his profane way of looking at things he would say that God would not let him die of cold or heat, of steel or poison ; it was his will to torture him with ghosts and fit him for the lowest depths of the fiery pit ; for he had a grudge against him which nought he might do of good or

evil made any account. Then he would steal away where no eye could see him, and weep bitter tears and pray in a blasphemous manner, as one bereft. After this would come a calm, a tightening of the lips, and a planning of murderous deeds of plunder and of vengeance.

For the open part of two years Alan Keith and the *St. Dennis* led a charmed life. They were the scourge of the adjacent seas, and flew their varied flags as far away as the Azores. Successful in every enterprise, they adjourned for occasional rest and safety to their land-locked fastness of Wilderness Creek. John Preedie had ventured to sail a valuable English prize into Salem, where he was received with great rejoicing. Keith's lieutenant had also succeeded in converting certain securities into current drafts. His letters from Plympton had also proved of great value. Plympton's notes he had turned mostly into gold—at a considerable discount, it is true. Furthermore, he had made arrangements for the *St. Dennis* to go into port there or at Boston whenever she chose. A Washington authority had secured him a proper commission for the *St. Dennis*. But Keith would not budge from Wilderness Creek. He had, however, early in the second season of his adventures as pirate and privateer, consented to the burying of the ship's remaining treasures. A party of Micmacs had been seen off the Southern shores of the creek, and with them, it was thought, an European officer. Furthermore, Keith had taken a British money ship, the very schooner with gold for the troops for which he had been on the lookout before her time last year. The schooner had tried to give the brigantine the slip, but Keith had overhauled her, and, overmatched as the schooner was, she had nevertheless fought desperately, and there had been killed and wounded on both sides. Keith, after unloading her money and permitting the remainder of her crew to take to her boats, had burnt the ship. By the weird light of her flaming timbers

the boats had been picked up by a British frigate, on her way to assist in the convoying of an East India fleet. She took the schooner's men on board and made for Halifax, where she landed them and reported the loss of the schooner. Here she met the *St. George* about to sail, and on board she carried Lester Bentz, whose second-hand knowledge of Keith's harbor had been under serious consideration at the Admiralty. Bentz had been compelled to sail with the *St. George*. Fortunately or unfortunately for Alan Keith, Pat Doolan had succeeded in making his escape from the ship on which he had been held to sail for England. He had got back to Halifax in time to hear all about the doings of the pirate Keith, as he was called by the Englishmen there, who were rejoiced that arrangements were being made to take him and his ship. Pat had succeeded in getting on board a fishing-smack that was making her way into Labrador waters. They had witnessed the fight between the schooner and the brigantine, and on her way to Wilderness Creek Keith had thought it wise to bring the smack to in response to signals which Pat had suddenly exhibited without the permission of the master. Pat, making himself known, was taken off, to the great delight of Keith, and the *St. Dennis* began to drift toward Wilderness Creek, much to the astonishment of the smack, that was studiously giving Demon's Rock the customary wide berth maintained in all weathers by every careful mariner. The master watched the fateful ship plunge into the breakers, and all his hands stood aghast at the sight, unable to account for her seeming to confound rocks and shoals and broken water for the navigable ocean. Some fiend, no doubt, had taken hold of the helm, while others beneath the keel had dragged her down ; for presently she disappeared without a sign, but only to find peaceful shelter behind the rocks of Wilderness Creek.

Pat Doolan's news sent a cold shiver to the heart of

Alan Keith. Their haunt once discovered, they would soon be face to face with England afloat and ashore. If Micmacs had been seen, and with them a European officer, they had best prepare for a fight to the death. Bentz on board the *St. George* was a sign that their days of ease were over. It was resolved to prepare for attack. Already there were several graves near the entrance to the cave of Demon's Rock. It was decided to add to these four others, that should be storehouses. They were to contain the more bulky of the company's booty. Conditions and agreements were entered into as to the future in respect of survivors. Keith had taken an extra bond of fate in secreting such of his store of money and securities as he thought best to have under his own personal control. This buried purse consisted of his own personal savings at Heart's Delight, the moneys intrusted to Preedie by Plympton for their enterprise, his share of the Spanish haul at the Azores, and other smaller stores of stones and scrip. Four casks filled with booty were buried among the graves. Upon them were piled stones and bowlders in a careful, formal manner, each treasure cask with its cross and rough record of names and ages.

But the commander of the *St. George* had no notion of making acquaintance with the harbor of Wilderness Creek. He discounted the Bentz story sufficiently to steer clear of such wild romancing as a secret harbor ; but he was under the impression that there might, after all, for a small ship, be steering way through the hitherto regarded as inaccessible rocks to the west of Demon's Rock—perhaps by Belle Isle; any ship navigating such a course being shielded by the hilly coast, and finding her way many miles out to the eastward.

Keith had taken an entirely exaggerated view of the possibilities which grew out of the information brought by Doolan. In order to clear the way for the exit from the

harbor, and also to emphasize the bona fides of the cemetery, the treasure ship was piloted out and permitted to go to pieces on the rocks; and to this day there are remains of her still, wedged into the jagged foothills of the high torrs that appear to march along the shore, headland upon headland, one endless range of stony dangers.

Pat's story of the destruction of Heart's Content and the carrying away of Plympton did not serve to cheer the lowering spirits of Alan Keith. And Sally Mumford and his son, what had become of them? Pat had no news whatever of them. They had disappeared from his ken and knowledge from the moment the "sodgers" marched into Back Bay Valley and laid violent hands upon the settlement. He thought Master Plympton had been able to give Sally considerable money, and that he had advised her to make her way to Halifax. But the trouble had so taken hold of his mind that he did not rightly remember anything; and having been in the sea, after his escape, for a whole day and a night, what he had really known had got washed out of him, and that was a fact. It had been in his mind to find Miss Mumford and offer her marriage, so that he might have had authority to protect her and look after the boy; but whether he would ever have the chance to meet her again, that was a puzzle, sure, though it was not a greater improbability than his having met Master Alan Keith, the brave and mighty hero.

The brave and mighty hero felt that he was doomed to a serious fall from the romantic heights to which he had soared in the imagination of Pat Doolan, and from the fairly safe position which he had hitherto considered secure at Wilderness Creek. Not that he feared death. That might come how and when it liked. But he had a grim idea that he was doomed for all kinds of miseries of captivity and torture, that he had for some untoward reason been marked down by fate or Heaven for black and cruel

misfortune. After all, was there a divine and jealous God? Had he offended the majesty of heaven in giving up the grand simplicity of the Scotch Church for the false faith of Father Lavello and for the selfish reason of being more acceptable to Plympton and his daughter? Keith brooded and drunk and drunk and brooded until he was in a fever of rage and violence; and, as if moved by the very fate he dreaded, he ordered the *St. Dennis* to be once more made ready for sea. The sight of Doolan had brought back to him pictures of his happy days, and he seemed to hear whispered prayers in a dearly loved voice in the interest of little David. He commissioned Doolan to find his son, and thought of some provision for him that might be safe; and he undertook to put the Irishman ashore at some favorable place or time for the purpose; but it was otherwise ordained.

Leaving the southern outlet of Wilderness Creek, the *St. Dennis* found herself under the surveillance of a frigate, which presently made sail toward St. John's, possibly on convoy work, for the fishing ships were once more sailing into Newfoundland waters. Keith's prime object was to put Doolan ashore, and Boston was thought to be his best port. The *St. Dennis* made for Boston; but before sundown found her course barred by that very three-decker from which she had escaped in her earliest adventure under Keith. Bearing down from the north, and now fairly in sight, was the frigate they had observed early in the day, exchanging with her British signals, which had, however, not deceived her. Keith changed his course and made for the Bahamas; and now began a chase in which the brilliant seamanship of the captains was only equaled by the sailing qualities of their ships. They were three graces of the sea, the three-decker playing the magnificent part of Juno. At sundown the frigate flung a shot squarely into the lower rigging of the *St. Dennis*, and the

three-decker stood by to watch the fight; for the *St. Dennis* was within range. Keith had not been idle. He had maneuvered his ship so as to get broadside on, and hardly had he roared down the main hatchway "Fire," than the *St. Dennis* trembled from keel to topmast with the explosion; that was Keith's response to the challenge of his adversary. When the smoke cleared, it was seen that the frigate's mainmast had fallen, and that her sails were riddled and torn.

"Noo, my lads," shouted Keith, "at her again while she's tekk'n up wi' sails—noo, lads, wear ship—this time sweep her infernal decks. Ah, ah! that's it; she'll wish she were back i' Halifax!"

The brigantine broke out into thunder and lightning, and the frigate was sorely smitten with the bolts. Her sails were in rags, and one of her two remaining masts was shattered.

"By the Lord, her deck's a cemetery," shouted Keith; "stand by, boarders! Curse it, the *George* is nae longer lookin' on!"

The three-decker had no idea of continuing to play the generous part she had elected to observe at the beginning of the fight. Regarding the two vessels as well matched, the vice admiral was willing to let the frigate have the glory of the contest and capture; but the frigate was so hard hit that duty had now to give place to sentiment; and before Keith had barely got out his last words the side of the three-decker burst into flame, and the brigantine reeled under the blow that struck her fore and aft. As the sun dropped into the sea night came on like the dropping of a curtain, but not before the brigantine had sustained the shock of a second broadside from the *St. George*, directed with terrible and fatal skill. The brigantine was literally crushed under the weight of the murderous hail. If the darkness had been somewhat delayed the *St. Dennis* might

have been saved by the foe and no doubt would have been, not only in a spirit of humanity, but for the glory of her capture and the arrest of her daring master. Knowing the danger of the waters into which they had chased the retreating brigantine, the three-decker, and the frigate had stood out for the open sea. During the night the brigantine drifted upon the coral reefs of the Bahamas, and every soul except one was lost. He rose up from the wreck and stood forth, a grim, silent figure—with bleeding feet and hands torn upon the reefs—stood forth in the night, blinded with spray, deaf with the cries of the dying and the rush and roar of the waters.

When morning broke the *St. George* sent off her pinnace to the reefs, but the ship was already breaking up, and no living soul could be seen, only a few floating bodies which the sea had not yet released from the spikes and spurs of the coral reefs. But on the barren shores of Abaco, before the day was over, that same grim figure with the bleeding feet, and hands all torn fighting with the living rocks, rose up once more and walked in a world of mocking sunshine.

CHAPTER XXI.

GHOSTS OF HEART'S DELIGHT.

For twenty years Alan Keith disappears from view among the surf-swept reefs of Bahama's thousand islands.

As his gaunt figure fades out in the mists of that mocking sunshine which found him alone, the one living remnant of the *St. Dennis*, there arises in the natural course of this romance, the lithe young figure of David, his son. It looms up clean cut against the gray horizon of an English champaign country bordering on the sea.

They might be limned as human types of Hope and Despair, this father and this son.

Away beyond the Spanish Main Alan Keith, galled with manacles of body and soul, tried to give to that of Hannah his wife a companion vision of David, their worse than orphaned son. That he could never do so encouraged him to believe the boy was living. It almost made him think that the deserted offspring was happy. Otherwise, he surely would have been able to summons him to the darkness of his cell.

Such is the love of man that Alan, all sin-stained and half crazy with fasting and confinement, was able to win the sweet companionship of Hannah from the Elysian fields. For years, in his imagination, she had rarely missed a day when she had not glided through the massive walls of his prison to sit by his side and talk to him of Heart's Delight. They had often spoken of little David, speculating upon what might be his fortunes. Strange, too, that the pathetic ghost of Hannah Plympton had no spiritual tidings of their son. This again argued for his life and happiness. Dead,

he would assuredly have joined her with the saints. Unhappy, she would have had a mission to comfort him. The jailers heard their familiar prisoner in his neglected den, talking, as was his wont, with unseen visitors.

The mad Englishman must indeed be very mad since he no longer complained of his lot, no longer craved for food, but took the stuff they gave him with a grateful smile.

One day they would relieve him of his chains and unbar his door. But would it be death or human freedom that would make the award of liberty? And what could so broken-witted a creature do for himself in the strange world upon which liberty would thrust him? It would surely be best for him that he should die.

Yet Alan, in his blackest despair, saw glimpses of a star shining afar off through the darkness.

Happily for David's peace of mind his father was dead to him, though the heroic story of his life, as he had heard it from Sally Mumford, and read of it in documents signed by David Plympton, lived continually in his fancy. To have known the truth about the prisoner of Talifet would have been a heavy burden for the generous hearted and romantic lad to carry. He loved the memory of his father, could see him in his fancy sitting in the porch of the great house with his mother, could see him in command of his avenging ship, fighting for the freedom of his fellows, and paying the glorious penalty of his courage and devotion. Whether he had any suspicion of the truth or not, David's father was to the son a hero whose memory was worthy of reverence and veneration. Miss Mumford liked nothing better than to tell David stories of Alan Keith's famous deeds, his kindness to her, and his devotion to his wife.

Miss Mumford was an old maid for David's sake. She looked the character of a cheery spinster to the life. Her trim little home in a corner of one of the Yarmouth Rows, with bright brass knocker and white lace curtains was not

less neat than herself. It was a picturesque house, with its windows full of flowers, the court or row, in which it was the principal dwelling, white with limewash, its pavements red with freshly washed bricks.

Hartley's Row at this point branched off into a small court, with three or four quaint houses, that might have suggested to the traveler a stray bit of Venice, an unlooked-for incident in some straggling bit of street abutting on a back canal. Indeed, to this day, there are by-ways in Yarmouth that might be by-ways of the City in the Sea, when the sun shines and soft shadows fall from window pediments and overhanging gables in well-kept rows that run off quiet and still from busy thoroughfares.

But Miss Mumford was more of a Dutchwoman than a Venetian in the matter of cleanliness. Her house, with its immediate approaches, was constantly washed and brushed up. The window-panes shone, the doorstep was as white as the blinds, the very atmosphere of the place was immaculate. Miss Mumford and her neighbor, Mildred Hope, in Hartley's Row, were the center of a clean and godly influence. Miss Mumford was only fifty, after all the years that had passed over Heart's Content and Heart's Delight, with wreck and ruin, with sun and storm. Here she lived once more in the country of her fathers, and, though a spinster, was still a mother to David Keith, beloved by the gracious lad, and respected by all their neighbors.

She had had a hard time of it when the new settlement at Heart's Content was broken up. Before the arrest of Plympton and the others the master had been able to place in her hands sufficient moneys for her own and David's security against want. By his advice she had followed him to London, and had taken a lodging there not far from the prison where he was confined. Plympton's durance was not of long continuance. He had influential friends at

Court. His story was honestly told by one who knew it well. The time was favorable for his cause. He was honorably acquitted of the charges brought against him, and received a certain compensation for the loss of his property, which he duly settled in trust for David Keith. This secured to the boy an education and a small income for life. With the moneys of which Miss Mumford was already possessed, the two were able to live in comparative affluence in Hartley's Row, at Yarmouth.

If at this moment it seems odd to speak of Sally as Miss, you would be satisfied if you could see her in her prim black silk with white fichu and apron, a pair of gold spectacles on her nose, and her gray hair dressed in two bunches of curls about her thoughtful, pleasant face.

Fortunately, as well for Plympton's companions as himself, they were supported in their defense by ardent petitions for their release. Even St. John's joined in the prayers of the last of the men and women of Heart's Delight and Heart's Content. Furthermore, they came before the Council by way of preliminary inquiry, at the moment when the new governor, Admiral Sir Richard Godwin Keats was on the point of sailing with instructions for the more enlightened government of Newfoundland, that had been inspired by recent events in that unhappy colony, backed by something like a revolt of the merchants at St. John's. As evidence of this refractory spirit, Sir John Duckworth had felt called upon to report the case of a merchant there, who had thought proper to dispense with the governor's leave, and had violently attempted to build a house, which, in a daring letter to the sheriff, he had avowed his intention of letting as a dwelling-house. This attempt, moreover, was not that of an individual, but was instigated and supported by a company of merchants and settlers, who had raised a fund, "the real object of which," declared the governor, "was to oppose the government,

and establish the right of property upon a quiet possession of twenty years." This was no further back than the early years of the present century. In April, 1813, the new governor was authorized to make many changes, one or two of which may be mentioned. The publicans of St. John's, in consideration of their license to sell ardent spirits, had to act as constables; they were now to be relieved of their duty and taxed for their privileges, the money thus obtained being set apart to create a civic arm for the proper preservation of peace and order. Grants of land at an annual quit rent for the purposes of cultivation were sanctioned, but with severe restrictions as to renewal of leases; the memorial of certain admirals for a rigorous continuation of the enforced return of seamen after the close of each fishing season, as heretofore, or for the right to seize them and bring them on board His Majesty's ships was disregarded; and further evidence was not wanting on all hands for indorsement of the faith that had made Alan Keith obstinate in his hopes of a free Newfoundland, with rights to dig and delve and make the land blossom as the rose.

Such was the generous mood of the government when David Plympton and his fellows stood for judgment; and the magnanimity of the time has burdened the shoulders of Her Majesty's ministers in our own day and hampered the natural progress of the enfranchised island. Although France had been the disturber of the peace of Europe, and her ruler was chiefly indebted to England for his throne, Great Britain, disregarding the petitions of Newfoundland and her own colonial and naval interests—and without any reason whatever, unless it was in the way of still discrediting and crippling the native settlers—voluntarily engaged to restore to the French the colonies, fisheries, factories, and establishments of every kind which they possessed, in 1792, on the seas and on the continent of America.

So liberal also were the privileges conceded to America that in a short time the incentive thus given to foreign competition was soon the cause of serious embarrassment to the colonists. Duly impressed with the importance of the fisheries, both the French and Americans at once established a system of bounties for their encouragement, and at the same time secured for their own fishermen a monopoly of their markets by a prohibitory duty on the import of foreign fish. This literally broke the financial backs of a vast majority of the Newfoundland merchants and fishermen. It was as if government, relenting of her tardy acts of justice, turned once more to rend the unhappy colony. The price of fish fell from forty-five shillings per quintal to twelve. Many large mercantile firms became bankrupt. Others realized on their property and retired from the country. No less than nine hundred cases arising out of the general failure came before the civil courts. Bills to the value of a million sterling were dishonored. The entire colony was at a standstill for work, and the modest savings of the industrious classes were swept away. The government had to send aid to the starving people, and did so with no unstinting hand. The innate pluck of the colonists, the recuperative power of the English people, eventually utilized the new and beneficent laws of local and imperial government; but to this day the magnanimity of the home government to a beaten foe, at the expense of the colony, is an ever growing seed of trouble and danger.

It was lucky, all the same, as we have said, for Plympton and the rest, that their revolt, so-called, had to be considered when the government was in a forgiving and generous mood. Plympton was released and to some extent compensated, the others were permitted to take service in His Majesty's fleet, in which capacity they disappear from these pages.

Lester Bentz, who sailed into port with the triumphant

St. George, was rewarded for his patriotic services with an official position on the governor's staff. Cowardice and cunning had come out so successfully in his case; and he had the satisfaction of bestowing an official snub upon Master David Plympton, whose business brought the two together, Plympton as a suppliant, Lester Bentz as an officer in authority in the colonial department. The admiral of the *St. George* had to report the complete annihilation of the *St. Dennis*, which had been used by Alan Keith for piratical purposes. It was debated whether Keith and his men should be proclaimed malefactors; but a super-sensible member of the Council of the Admiralty urged that they wasted time in discussing dead men. Moreover, there had been something gallant in the way in which Keith had captured the brigantine from the King's enemy; and it was plain that he had been driven to revolt and madness by the overstrained authority of Ristack and the other fishing admirals, who had used their powers for their individual advantages; Keith and his fellows being dead—victims to their temerity in fighting an English ship—there let them rest. And this in effect was the verdict of the court, which was too busy with a thousand living questions to do more at the moment than advance the promotion of the commander of the *St. George* and authorize the speedy distribution of whatever prize money belonged to his ship. Lester Bentz had said something about the possibility of hidden treasures that might be found in the locality of Keith's hiding place; but he was vague and hypothetical in his suggestions, and the admiral of the *St. George* declared "fore Gad" that any man was welcome to whatever they might dig out of the God forsaken coasts and creeks about Demon's Rock.

Plympton having arranged with one of the trustees of David and Miss Mumford for their removal to Yarmouth, where he had legal and other associations, went back to

Newfoundland and busied himself there for some time, more especially in the northern territory of Labrador. Within a year or two he died and was laid to rest with the remains of his wife and father at St. John's.

And so the years passed away, and the treasure of Wilderness Creek reared its triple-headed lie among the graves of the dead and gone, and took upon its stony front the same tokens of time and weather that marked the true mementoes. In winter these silent sentinels of the Cave of Demon's Rock were white with snow and frost, ghosts of the icy wilderness. Summer found them green and gray with moss and lichen.

In later years an occasional traveler, pioneer of trade and commerce, missionary of civilization, prospector of metals, and hidden stores of earth and sea, would cross himself or doff his cap, at sight of the little cemetery with its three cairns that stood higher than the rest, as Fate might have designed for a land-mark in the mazes of this strange eventful history.

CHAPTER XXII.

DAVID'S SWEETHEART.

She was the only daughter of Zaccheus Webb. He was a fisherman, well-to-do, and of high repute along the coast, north and south, from Cromer to Yarmouth, from Yarmouth to Lowestoft. He lived at Caister, and had helped to build the lookout station at Caister Point, which is still one of the artistic details of the wild coast-line that adorns many a draughtsman's study of East Coast scenery. Old Zacky, as his intimate friends loved to call him, liked nothing better on quiet summer evenings, when he had leisure, than to smoke a pipe with the lookout men and talk about the adventures they had seen in the North Sea, and the ships that had been lost on the Scroby Sands and the Middle Cross. His favorite theme when he was in an argumentative mood was to deny the possibility set up by Justice Barkstead that some day Scroby Sands might be a seaport, while Yarmouth would have gone inland, deserted by the sea, which had left Sandwich high and dry—Sandwich in the Straits of Dover. But Zaccheus was not of a controversial disposition; nor was he a man of educational culture. He could sign his name, and make sufficient sense of figures to calculate his gains and profits and estimate the costs and risks of his business. His parents could have had no idea of the possibilities of the character he would develop when they gave him his unusual and difficult Christian name of Zaccheus, which according to the Syriac is understood to mean innocence; but it was a true forecast. Old Zacky was as unsophisticated a man outside his own business as can be well imagined, and as guileless even

in his trading as is consistent with keeping a balance in your stocking or at your bankers. Zaccheus had with all this a certain shrewd view of things that kept him not only straight with the world but forth—on and in front of his neighbors. Briefly, it may be said of him, that he knew his trade, believed in God, the *Flying Scud*, and his daughter Elmira.

David Keith hoped to marry Elmira Webb as soon as he had obtained his articles and should be taken into partnership by his master, a conveyancing lawyer and general practitioner, who thought more of the fine manly qualities of his articled clerk than he did of his fitness for professional life.

David did his utmost to acquire such knowledge as best pleased old Petherick, his chief. But he knew more about fishing than conveyancing. It came natural to him to sail a boat, interpret the signs of the herring season, and forecast the weather. He was born for the sea, and an eccentric Fate had bound him to the law. Mr. Waveny Petherick was a kind-hearted man; he did not stand in the way of David's nautical enjoyments; he approved of his engagement to Elmira Webb, and once a week he gave the lad a half-holiday, on which occasions David donned such gear of oilskin and canvas, as delighted the heart of Zaccheus Webb, the smack owner of Caister.

For most of the week David sat at his desk, copying drafts or professing to read law, while his mind wandered away with the ships that came and went, moored for a little time opposite his window to load or unload; but on this summer day that is eventful in this history he made holiday, and it was in his mind to have it settled both with father and daughter whether he should be accepted truly as the future husband of Elmira Webb. He had never closed his desk, and put on his nautical suit of blue flannel and rough-tanned boots with such a business air. Besides, it had

become necessary that he should look the future full in the face, and there was no future for him which did not give him Elmira as his wife and companion. Miss Mumford agreed with his intention to come to a final understanding with Elmira and her father. She had failed to impress David with his youth and inexperience ; she had argued that he might see some other girl whom he could love ; that Elmira knew but little of the world, and that she might meet some other young gentleman she could care for more than him ; she had dwelt upon the inadvisability of boys and girls being engaged before they could really know their own minds ; but finding that David was desperately in love, and believed himself to be a man ; finding that Zaccheus Webb rather encouraged David's unmistakable pretensions, and that David had a fine prospect of being well-off in the matter of money, she encouraged him to have it out with Elmira.

When he left Hartley Row that afternoon to meet the girl, she wished him "Good luck," and after he had gone wept tears of anxiety and hope, and said a little prayer for his unabated happiness. Mildred Hope, who was known as "the prison visitor," came in soon after David's departure, and Miss Mumford poured out to her all her hopes and fears.

Mildred listened with a deeper personal interest than Miss Mumford understood or dreamed of ; for Mildred had no wish beyond the good of others ; no object in life except that of a true and unselfish philanthropy, young as she was, and, according to many, comely and pretty. But Mildred Hope comes into this romance a little later in the story.

Meanwhile attention is called to David Keith waiting for the girl he loved with all the ardor of his youthful and romantic nature.

He stood upon a wind-swept ridge of the North Dunes, now shading his eyes to scan the distant roadway that came

circuitously from Webb's house, now watching the highway that crossed the sands from Yarmouth, now looking out across the sea far away and in fancy lifting the veil of the future.

So had Alan, his father, looked out into the years to imagine a future the very opposite from that which lay hidden from mortal ken, to behold which at any time might paralyze the strongest.

To David the outlook was bright as the swelling sea at his feet. He could see it even through the stone walls and the great tin boxes in Petherick's musty office. The walls, and all the dingy maps and legal notices with which they were decorated, would melt away before David's thoughtful gaze, and always along the bright road that lay before him he would rejoice in the companionship of the prettiest, the smartest, the merriest girl in all the world, Elmira Webb.

But she kept him waiting, this willful beauty. She was a creature of caprice, wayward, tantalizing, but David loved her all the more for her feminine weaknesses, her coquetry, her pouting, and her mad-cap follies. Was she not her father's pet? Did not everybody in Yarmouth, when she went there, turn to look at her in the street? Did she not outshine all the other beauties of the coast? And was she not one day to be David's wife? If Zaccheus Webb trusted her with his heart and fortune, and loved the very ground she trod upon, who was David that he should be impatient with her for a single second.

Presently, behold she cometh; the pretty, self-conscious maiden, brave in bright apparel; all in her Sunday best; flower-decked tuscan hat, short-waisted summer gown with flowing sash and dainty boots. She has been to the town, it is market-day; and furthermore she has been on business there for Zaccheus, her father; and needs must wear her best. She had been delayed somewhat, too, and there is no time to change for the little sea trip she has promised

David, who is bent on bringing in from her father's smack some of the fish with which the *Flying Scud* is laden.

Elmira, alighting from the mail-cart that set her down on the road leading to her father's house, takes her way across the Dunes, and leaves behind her a long trail of tiny footfalls, prints of a dainty, high-heeled shoe, and the marks thereof are wayward and uncertain. Now they sink deep into the drifting sand, and leave but shallow shapes; now there are heel marks strong and firm, as if they emphasized some passing thought; and now there are light and vague impressions of both sole and heel, level footfalls of a shapely silver-buckled shoe.

While David waited for her and beguiled the time with imaginative pictures of their future, another marked her footfalls; one who knew her wayward nature without reading its imprint on the sand.

They were friends, the boy who waited and the man who followed, the one true as steel, the other unreliable, and fascinating in a manly way, as Elmira was attractive in a certain feminine imperiousness that finds its most tender sympathizer in temperaments such as that which made David Keith her slave. Harry Barkstead had the kind of reputation that has a charm for many women, however innocent. He was overbearing with the sex, masterful, suspected of being on too familiar terms with the charming widow, Mrs. Leyton-West, whose country house was adjacent to his father's property, and he was known to have made a conquest of more hearts than one, among the high-bred damsels of the county who patronized the town on great occasions of public state and ceremony.

Opposite natures often fraternize the better for their contrasting individualities. David Keith admired Harry Barkstead, almost envied him his knowledge of the world, and delighted to make excursions with him in his yacht, and to shoot over the Breydon waters, and trap the game by

Ormesby Lake and Fritton. Moreover Harry was in David's confidence, knew all about his engagement to Elmira, and sympathized with him in his ambition, domestic and otherwise. Yet Harry could not, try as he would, keep back an unfair, if not unholy, inspiration of competition with his friend for Elmira's favors. He did honestly struggle against this unfriendly direction of his inclination, and when most he thought he had conquered, Elmira threw out signals of encouragement, and he went blindly on, as he did on this summer day, following her in the hope that he might have a pleasant *tête-à-tête* while old Zacky was busy at the fishing. Thinking that she was going home, he resolved to call, on some pretext or other, either to see her father, or ask after David, or with any other excuse, when she struck off away from the house in the direction of the Lower Dunes by the sea. His curiosity was piqued. He followed, never thinking, however, that she had seen him ; for where the little hills and valleys gave him shelter he took it, and wandered on, noting the impress of her footfalls, and dwelling upon the sylph-like, willowy motion of her splendid figure, fine in form, yet round and supple too. She saw the shadow of it on the sand, and gave it her own complimentary regard as well. She rejoiced in her beauty, she reveled in the healthy beat of her pulse, and the general sense of elation that came of both, combined with her well-cut gown and artistic hat and summer flowers.

Alan Keith had suffered rather that Hannah, his wife, had loved him with as true a heart-beat as his own. How will David, his son, fare with a love that is as uncertain as an April day, and yet while it lasts, is as bright as the sun that shines between the showers ?

There are innocent, willful, wayward beauties who only need the masterful hand of a true and loving consort to make them all that man can desire, who, like the bruised blossoms of the field, send forth their richest perfume

beneath the pressure of a rough, unmindful footfall. Some women need control in the strongest sense of masterful authority ; all women are the better when their own natural tendency to tyrannize is held in check by the stronger will of a none the less affectionate lover who respects himself and the man's ordained authority ; while he relinquishes to the woman all that belongs to her rightful share of power and pays all deference to that very feminine strength which in man would be counted weak.

You never saw anything more bewitching than the dark blue, dreamy eyes of Elmira Webb, that were as arch as a grisette's at one moment, and at another soft and enticing as that of the traditional houri. Sometimes in her very talk she seemed to cling and seek shelter from the world's alarms ; at others she was self-possessed and defiant. She had moods of merriment and moods of melancholy that Zaccheus, her father, called the doldrums, the like of which was natural to "gels." Her hair was brown and wavy. It was tied up in a bunch high enough to show her sunburnt neck, which was suggestive of a sinuous strength. She was a trifle above the medium height, just tall enough, David had long ago discovered, to top his shoulder, and David was within an inch of six feet. She had a finely formed, flexible mouth, lips neither full nor thin, but with a lurking smile or pretty sarcasm in the corners, that gave piquancy to her manner and point to all she said. She had a small nose, with a moderately open nostril, that suggested higher breeding than her station implied, and a beautifully modeled chin with a benevolent dimple in it that contradicted other characteristics of the face and head that naturally belong to the selfish and inconstant. How these contradictory qualities, good and bad, developed under the influences to which they were subjected remains to be seen.

David Keith was the very opposite of Elmira Webb.

The contrast, no doubt, had for him a subtle charm. He was dark. She was fair. He was resolute and strong of will. She was fantastic and fickle. He was of powerful build. She was soft and willowy. He had all the capacity of loving that belongs to earnest, generous nature. She lacked constancy. They were a very handsome, even showy couple; she with her mischievous eyes and lively manners; he with his dark dreamy eyes, his thick black hair, his bronzed, open, honest face, and in his walk the swing of a young giant. To think of him sitting on a high stool in Petherick's office, was a wrong to romance, and to the boy's antecedents. He had inherited something of his grandfather's aristocratic appearance, but underneath the gentle nature his mother had given him, there burnt the fires of ambition and passion, of which so far he had little or no consciousness, except in the deep and intense indignation which was aroused in his nature by stories of wrong and oppression, and an occasional yearning for adventure inspired by the romances of the sea and land, which he read when he should have been studying the musty law books that were to fit him for his career as Petherick's chief clerk, and, in the dim future, Petherick's junior partner.

"At last," the impatient lad exclaimed, "it seems an eternity since three o'clock—why, how splendid you look!"

He took her proffered hand as she stepped from the higher ground to a dip in the dunes, and then turning about to see that they were unobserved he took her face between his strong hands and kissed her.

"There now, you have rumpled my hat," she said in her fascinating imperative way. "Serves me right, I ought to have changed it and my dress, too; but I thought you would be mad if I kept you waiting."

She turned her head as if she expected to see someone on the bank.

"Mad, nothing could ever make me mad with you!"

"Oh, I don't know about that," she replied, readjusting her hat, and, with an affected fastidiousness, stepping among the gray-blue marrams and over the sea-thistles and yellow lavender that decorated the dunes.

"Don't you see I have got on my Sunday shoes," she said, in answer to his look of surprise.

"Shall I carry you?" David replied, stopping to ask the question.

"Carry me; no!" she said. "I don't think you could."

"Couldn't I though!" the lad replied, putting out his arms.

"Then you won't," she said. "I shall spoil my shoes for all that."

"Shall I lend you mine?"

"How can I get into that dirty boat?"

"I'll show you," said David, "when we get there."

The boat lay in little more than an indentation of the beach, made by the constant dragging of it and certain yawls that were occasionally hauled up there by rope and windlass, and it was quite a distance from the ridge along the hilly dunes to the beach. Every now and then when they were hidden from view David would stop to admire the fisherman's coquettish daughter, the like of whom for wit and dash—and for dress and vanity, some would add—the whole coast from the Wash to Hunstanton, towns and cities included, could not show; and David delighted in the wayward, pretty girl, more particularly on this day of all others when it seemed as if she had actually dressed for the occasion that to him was fraught with so much moment.

At length they came to the boat, a lumbering kind of dingey, with long oars and a rough brown sail stowed away on the bottom, a bit of old tarpaulin, smelling of fish, and a roomy bit of seat that had been the work of David, fixed low down by the tiller.

"Sand isn't dirt, you know," said David, "it really cleans

things, and sand like this is good enough for Lawyer Petherick's pounce-box;" jumping aboard and making a gigantic duster of the tarpaulin, and then dropping it over on the sand.

"I don't think I'll go," she said, meaning to go all the time. "I shall spoil my things."

"Not go!" said David, looking at her, a very sailor-man in his rough jacket and his slouch hat pushed back from his open forehead.

She could not help admiring him as he stood up for a moment, and watched the anxious expression of his face change to delight when he understood that she was only playing with him. Then she mentally compared him with Harry Barkstead, the university gentleman, with his super-fine manners and his boastful commanding ways.

David plunged down and, thrusting his long arms into the thurruck beneath the seat he had made for days of sailing when Elmira was more than usually difficult to please, he drew out a pilot jacket and a great woolen muffler, with which he constructed a cushion.

"There!" he exclaimed, "now give me your hand!"

Elmira could have vaulted into the boat with ease, as she had done many a time; but she enjoyed David's considerate acts of courtesy. They made her feel more like a lady, and less like a fisherman's daughter, though in her way she was proud of her father. It was only when Harry Barkstead called at their cottage that she felt a little ashamed of her father's homely ways and want of education.

"It's all very well to start in a clean boat, but how will it be when we've taken on board a cargo of father's fish?"

She had seen away in the distance the figure of Harry Barkstead, and could not help wondering why he had followed her, and then disappeared as if he had dropped into the earth. He must be lying down in one of the valleys of

the dunes. "Why?" she wondered, in a curious and indefinite way.

"If it comes to that," said David, "we won't take in any cargo; we'll make a passenger boat of the *Swallow*. By the way, I wonder Zaccheus thought of calling a great lumbering boat like this the *Swallow*. Come, Mira; now see, it is fit for any queen, and, therefore, almost fit for you."

He took both her hands. She smiled and yielded, and yet she wondered what Harry Barkstead could mean by following her, and when he saw David waiting, should stay behind and hide. She did not tell David what she was thinking of.

"There you are," the boy exclaimed, handing her to her seat. "Never saw you look so lovely. Why, your cheeks are rosy as a Dutch apple."

"Tell me something else that's disagreeable," was the sharp reply. "I hate to have red cheeks." And that was true, for her rivals said she drank vinegar to make them pale. They were pale, as a rule—the delicate fairness that is rare as it is healthful.

Then leaping ashore David seized the bow and tugged the *Swallow* into the water. It was no child's play to haul the dingey into the flowing tide; but David loved to test his strength and master difficulties. She was fairly afloat before he clambered aboard and pushed her into deep water. Then he laid hold of the oars and the *Swallow* began to dance lightly over the swelling water that rippled past her and laid tributes of weed and shell along the yellow beach.

"Your cheeks are red enough anyway," said Elmira, as David paused to mop his burning face with a silk bandanna handkerchief which had been presented to him by "Sarah Mumford to her dear, dear young master, David Keith," as a birthday gift.

"I expect they are," he said, laughing, "they are hot

enough, but I did not mean that yours were—you know what I mean, anything but lovely ; I'm a bad hand at a compliment."

"You said they were red."

"I meant that there was just a little flush upon them like——"

"Like a dairymaid," she replied ; "you are too complimentary ;" and then when she saw a shadow of disappointment and anxiety fall across the boy's face, she laughed and showed her white firm teeth, and cried, "There, don't be silly, pull away !" and took off her long gloves that reached to her dimpled elbows, and laid her hand upon the tiller, putting the boat's head straight for the *Flying Scud.*

"Do you know why I was impatient for your coming to-day, more particularly impatient, I mean ?" David asked, pulling easy ; "of course you don't."

"It is generally because you love me so," she answered archly, "at least that is your excuse for being so rude as to tell me how late I am."

"Well, that is always the reason," he answered, "to-day more than ever. I have something dreadfully important to tell you, something that nobody knows as yet, except my trustees and me."

"It's a secret, then ?" she said.

"Yes, a sort of a secret—at present," he replied.

"You mean it will no longer be a secret when you have told me !"

"They do say women can't keep secrets," said David, "but I believe they can do anything ; I know you can—that is, anything a woman might be proud to do."

"Why have you taken to calling me a woman all at once ?" she asked. "I am not so old as you ; and I'm sure I never thought of calling you a man."

"Then I really believe you will when I have told you

what I was telling to the sea and the sky and the dear old dunes for lack of you, when I saw you come sailing along the sand-hills like a fairy yacht on a fairy sea."

"Very well, I am listening," she replied, "tell me while I put the *Swallow's* head about—here's a boat from the *Scud* signaling us."

CHAPTER XXIII.

DAVID TELLS ELMIRA OF HIS MISSION TO NEWFOUNDLAND.

"Steady! let them come up to us," said David.

The *Flying Scud's* boat drew alongside.

"Capp'n Webb says yo' moughtn as well put back; he be goin' to land catch at jetty and 'ull be hum to supper."

As a rule the fishermen ferried their hauls from the road to the beach, where the women washed and packed the mackerel or herrings, as the case might be, while the auctioneer's bell resounded along the coast, to notify the lots of fish he had for public sale. In the regular fishing season, when "the poor man's fish" was the harvest of the sea, in which Yarmouth chiefly engaged, the beach was a sight to behold. Men must have a chief. If some bold spirit does not elect itself to domineer over a community, the community will elect one. Even Heart's Delight, freed from the tyranny of the admiral's rule, when the fishing season was over, must have a leader, and they obeyed David Plympton. The Yarmouth fisherman, in the old days, and quite late in the present century, would elect a "mayor" to settle all disputes that might arise among them. He was dressed in a half-classical kind of a way to represent Neptune, and was carried about the town in a gayly decorated boat on wheels. In the midst of these opening festivities the Dutch fishing fleet would come sailing in, and then there was the "Dutch Sunday," with its commingling of foreign folk and British, and "all the fun of the fair," which the knowing Hollanders held upon the beach for the sale of various toys and wooden shoes, globes of cheese, and red-faced apples. Added to the Dutch

fleet, the North Country boats often brought owners and captains and their wives, and they lodged in the Rows, and helped to make Yarmouth busy on market days, when the local traders and kiddiers laid out their stalls and spread their white awnings, making the market square gay and busy.

But this July fishing of Zaccheus Webb and the rest was what might be called the off-season, and it made no particular addition to the beach life of the time ; and, moreover, old Zacky had a warehouse and fish-curing place in the town, and he generally had carts at the jetty to carry his cargoes thither, except now and then in the matter of a small take in a July fishing.

"All right," said David, and Elmira waved her handkerchief to the *Flying Scud*, which had lifted her anchor, and was already inviting the breeze with her great brown sails.

"But we won't put back, eh ?"

"No," said Elmira. "Won't you hoist sail, and then you can talk without stopping to puff and blow like a grampus, as father would say."

She leaned back and laughed as she criticised her companion, who had found his secret and the heat a little trying.

"I am not quite up to my usual form, I grant you," said David, "but I'm equal to row you to the opposite coast and cast anchor at Schevenham, if you wish."

"No, thank you. I know how strong you are, and how proud you are of it," she replied, still laughing.

"Who have you been sharpening your wit upon in the town ?" the boy asked, shipping his two heavy oars.

"If you smudge my gown I'll never forgive you," she said, without noticing his question, but moving as far away as she could from the mast and ropes which David began to get into place. Presently he hauled up the lugger sail, and

Elmira put the boat about to catch the breeze which began to freshen as the sun declined.

"You really ought to be a sailor," said Elmira, as the boy hauled the sail taut against the mast, and offered her the control of the rope.

"There," he said, making a cushion of a piece of tarpaulin and a pilot jacket which he had flung into the boat at starting. "If you'll sit here, I'll come to the tiller. That's it; and if I ought to be a sailor, I'm sure you ought to be a sailor's wife."

"Oh, indeed," she said, "it is not my ambition, I assure you."

"I hope not, for I am to be a lawyer; but law or no law, we'll have our boat, Mira, not to say our yacht."

"Will we?" she said, settling herself comfortably at his feet, and holding the line with the hand of an expert.

"Will we? Why, of course we will; and we'll sail right round the world. When I come into my money, Mira, I fear I shall astonish poor old Petherick."

"Yes?" she said, "I didn't know you were coming into any money, David."

"Nor did I," said David, "until this week; that is one of the things I want to talk about."

"Very well, as I said before, I am listening."

"This is how it is; my grandfather Plympton died ten years ago; he left me his heir, but his lands had been confiscated; the case has been in the courts; his trustees have been fighting it off and on ever since he died, and at last it has been decided that a certain piece of territory at Heart's Delight in Newfoundland, originally granted to his father and which he inherited, is to be restored to his heirs and assigns—well, Mira, my dear, I am his heir and assigns—in fact his heir, and I am to go to Newfoundland to take possession."

"To Newfoundland!" Elmira exclaimed.

"Yes, to Newfoundland."

"You seem very glad."

"I am."

"To go away. And yet you say you love me and cannot live without me."

"That is why I am glad."

"Indeed."

"Because, you see, when all that is settled I shall come back and marry you."

"It takes two to make a wedding," said Elmira.

"I know that, and we shall be the happiest two in the world," he said, leaning over her and kissing her.

"You are very masterful now that you are going to have a bit of money," she said, untying her hat, and pinning the strings to the waistband of her gown.

"Yes, my own," he said, smoothing her hair as she coquettishly laid her head near him and then rested it upon his knee.

"And are you going to be rich, David?"

"No, not exactly rich; Petherick doesn't know what the land's worth yet; and there is, it appears, a recent purchase of territory in Labrador that the old man made just before he died, but Petherick says it is a piece of no-man's land that's worth nothing to anybody unless there may be minerals; supposing there are, they might not be worth working, so the Labrador inheritance does not count."

"I never said I would marry you," laughed Elmira, pressing her head against him.

"You have said it in your eyes; you have said it with your lips when they uttered no words, and with your dear hand when we have said good-night; you are saying it now. O Mira, what would become of me if you were to say no, or if I lost you, or we were parted; well, I should go crazy, that's all!"

She permitted David to draw her nearer to him so that

he could look into her eyes, and as he loosed the tiller, and the boat drifted with a flapping sail, he kissed her with his burning lips and in a hoarse whisper, asked her if she truly loved him; "not as I love you," he said, "with all my heart and soul, and with every thought, and at every moment of my life, night and day; but enough to bear with me, and let me devote my life to you?"

"Yes, David, I love you," she said, overcome with his passion, and returning his hot kisses, "and I will marry you!"

"My darling!" he exclaimed, "My darling!" and he could say no more; nor did he speak for ever so long, and the boat drifted round and headed as if of her own accord for Caister and home.

The sun was sinking beneath the sea. A light cool breeze arose. David kept the *Swallow's* head straight for Caister; and for the time being the world held no happier couple than David Keith and Elmira Webb. She had given herself up to the glamour of the time. He had realized in her confession the dearest wish of his heart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"'TWAS DOWN IN CUPID'S GARDEN."

Love—or what is generally known as love—is a ticklish business. Elmira, with David's arm round her as they walked along the dunes in the moonlight to her father's cottage, believed she loved David Keith. Between his embraces, and as sequels to his predictions of happy days in store, she indulged in curious speculations of what Harry Barkstead would say. He was the beau ideal of the east coast girl's fancy—he was so bold, "had such a way with him, and was so much the gentleman."

Then there were other wooers who had followed Elmira with their eyes and sent her hot love messages on St. Valentine's day.

It occurred to her to think there was something selfish in David's desire to secure her all to himself, to rob her of the freedom of flirtation; but the last he should never do, she whispered to herself, even as he talked of his trip to Newfoundland and his return to marry his love and set up housekeeping wherever she pleased.

The truth is Elmira had not the gift of constancy. She was constitutionally disingenuous. She could not help it perhaps. If she had had some guiding authority to warn her against her natural shortcomings she might have improved upon them. She lacked conscientiousness. Her moral faculties were weak. What phrenologists call self-esteem and amativeness were out of proportion with the controlling organs necessary to make them virtues. Elmira's mother, moreover, died when she was a child, and she had a certain politic strain in her intellectual organism that enabled and

induced her to disguise from her father those characteristics which might have shocked or pained him, rough and uncultured though he undoubtedly was, for his education had been an experience by land and sea, altogether outside of books and schools.

The common people of Caister and Yarmouth called Harry's father, Justice Barkstead; the county folk knew him as Sir Anthony Barkstead, Baronet. As a justice of the peace, however, he had won more renown than he had in his position as a baronet of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. He was a regular attendant at the Sessions, and he was a county magistrate as well as a magistrate of the borough of Yarmouth, having qualifications in both county and town. He was a very rich man, had come of a rich family, and had married a rich wife, chiefly through whose influence he had been made a baronet; for curiously enough his descent from the Barkstead who was military governor of Yarmouth for Cromwell, had militated against him with the king and the government, so long reaching is the royal and aristocratic memory of England. Yarmouth had sided with the Parliament, and had suffered considerably for its hostility to the king. At the restoration the Yarmouth corporation was purged of its disaffected members, and an address of sorrow and grief that had been voted on the death of Cromwell was obliterated from the town records. The local charters were surrendered for new ones, which gave the king power to nominate his adherents to the chief offices of the borough. Barkstead and others of the Parliament's adherents fled to Holland. The States, under pressure, gave them up, and they were hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn, Barkstead, the ancestor of the Yarmouth justice of our story, with the rest, taking their death cheerfully and maintaining that what they had done was in the cause of justice. Succeeding Barksteads lived to prosper and win the respect of Hollanders and the men of

Norfolk and Suffolk, but whenever honors for any of them were spoken of, the Premier of the time shrunk from recommending for distinction the descendants of a man who signed the death warrant of Charles, and was hanged at Tyburn. Strange that this should have been remembered against them in spite of services in Parliament and in battle ; but when Squire Barkstead, of Ombersley Hall, justice of the peace and millionaire, married into the family of the loyal Pastonnes, the criminal strain, so-called, was overlooked, and while quite a boy Harry was made heir to a baronetcy as well as heir to thousands of freehold acres besides foreign scrip and shares in the New River near London. Sir Anthony was a man of scrupulous honor, generous to a fault, but rigid in his views of morality and religion, a fearless and honest justice of the peace, regarding the poor rather with lenience than the rich, whom he debited in his judgments with their advantages of education and responsibility to society whenever it came to be his duty to deal with what Yarmouth called the quality.

Justice Barkstead had loved his wife devoutly. On her deathbed she had commended Harry to his affectionate care, and Sir Anthony had found comfort and solace in the lad's advancement until of late years, when he had grown out of his control and authority, a patron of the turf, fond of society, a man of fashion in London, with a stable at Melton, a yacht at Cowes, and guilty of every extravagance. Of late years he and his father had had serious words about his excessive expenditure. Sir Anthony had pointed out to him that such a leakage as he had introduced into the Barkstead banking account might in time drain off not only thousands but millions. Harry would for a time neutralize the ill effect of these scenes by a visit to Ormsby, to join his father in his country work and pleasures, visiting his friends, sitting with him on the bench, shooting over his manors, flushing the duck covers at Fritton and Ormsby

broads, and making himself generally agreeable. These visits, alas! were incidents in the lives of some of the girls of Yarmouth and Lowestoft that left sad shadows behind them. Harry Barkstead was known to the county as a remarkably successful young fellow with women, "a regular Don Juan, by Jove," it was said at the county club. The worst of it all was the fellow had such pleasant and gracious manners; he was just as free and frank with the poor as he was with the rich; he had inherited from his mother the charm of manner for which the Pastonnes were distinguished, and with it the gracelessness and villainous gallantries of the court at which the Pastonnes were famous in its worst days. When Harry brought his yacht round to Yarmouth he would make friends with the entire community, take seats for their new theater, attend their concerts, visit with the mayor, and boat along the shore to talk to the beachmen. He had long shown a particular fancy for old Zacky Webb and the lookout men of Caister Point. Many a time had he sat and smoked a cigar in the little house on stilts and discussed nautical affairs with them. He loved "to get old Zacky on" about Sir Anthony's notions concerning the destinies of Scroby Sands and Yarmouth.

David felt it an honor to have Harry Barkstead for his friend whenever that young hidalgo visited Ormsby Hall. What wonder, then, that Elmira Webb should feel flattered by his attentions. She was clever enough, however, to understand that there was more of the real true lover in David than in Harry. She was vain enough to think she could rival the prettiest of women, whatever their high position might be, if she had a chance; but it was already a tradition of the coast that Harry Barkstead was not a marrying man. On the contrary he was looked upon, by such young women as Elmira had heard discuss him, as a sultan who threw his handkerchief, a cavalier who counted

his conquests, and could never be caught in the bonds of matrimony. Elmira went to church and taught in the Sunday school, so she knew what the young women of Yarmouth thought about young Squire Barkstead, as some of them called him. Furthermore, Mildred Hope had in her quiet way ventured to caution her against the blandishments of Sir Anthony's son, who not only chatted with Zaccheus at Caister Point, but looked in occasionally at the cottage on the dunes to chat with him about the mysteries of his trade.

Indeed, when David and Elmira arrived at Webb's quaint old house on the night of their memorable sail, Harry Barkstead was sitting in the little garden, smoking a cigar. He had been there for over an hour, during the latter part of which he had been watching through a short, but effective glass the maneuvers of the *Swallow*—not to mention the maneuvers of the boat's happy occupants. The devil of selfishness and lust had tempted him to be jealous of his unsophisticated friend, David Keith.

There are natures that cannot endure to look upon the happiness of either friend or foe; jealous natures that hate other men's successes even in the ordinary paths of life; but the professed "lady-killer," as some men are wont to be called, is not inaptly typified by the dog in the manger.

Harry Barkstead found his friendship for David and his liking for old Zaccheus Webb in conflict with his habit of being first and foremost in all things. He resented David's successful courtship of the girl who had turned many a young head on the coast and inland, and was acknowledged to be phenomenally pretty. How, indeed, she came to be Zaccheus Webb's daughter was mirthfully treated as a mystery of heredity in the county circles of Norfolk wherever Harry had heard her mentioned.

It was a garden in which holier thoughts than those that occupied Harry's mind might well have had place; but

Eden was beyond all gardens lovely, and yet the serpent had his way there; and why in the still more degenerate days of this history should one be surprised at the spirit of evil invading the little paradise of Webb's cottage on the Upper Dunes at Caister. Harry Barkstead sat upon a rustic seat that had been made out of the timbers of a wreck on the North Cross sands, backed with the figure-head of an East Indiaman, a dusky beauty with golden crown and necklace, propitiatory deity of some long lost vessel trading to the Eastern seas. The gold had faded, and the dark visage aud half robed form was worn with time and tide, with wind and weather, the original timber showing through the rough tawdry blue of the gown, the grain of the original oak marking the not too comely features of the pathetic image, all that was left of a well formed ship, that had sailed the seas with brave and merry hearts, to go to pieces at last upon the Needles, whither Zaccheus had brought this relic for his Norfolk garden. "Not as he moughtn't a got a more ornamental figger at hum, but seemed as if un took to the dark lady, and so bein' in them other seas he brote her along," and set her up for a token of the dangers of the deep.

Harry heeded her not, nor the hollyhock nor nasturtiums that half hid her battered visage, the tall pyramidian flowers of pink and red growing aloft and waving in the breeze like half-furled flags, the nasturtiums creeping after them and clinging to seat and figure, and putting forth cheerful splashes of color and great round leaves that waved in sympathy with the hollyhock's flexible columns of leaf and bloom.

It was a large square garden of summer flowers, arranged in well-kept beds, and bordered with paths of sea sand. Clove pink and sweet briar mingled their perfumes with the rose, and great yellow pansies lay in beds alongside bunches of dwarf sweet-pea.

The cottage was built of ordinary local brick and stone, with a wooden porch and seat, and over the door and up beneath the eaves of the chamber windows climbing roses clustered close and sweet. It is not always sunny along the east coast; inland the wind blows, the rain beats; it is often bitterly cold even in June and July, but nothing seems to make any difference to the flowers even to this day. You may ride and drive through Norfolk and Suffolk in cold or storm, in sun or shower, and you shall still find every bit of available garden that is not devoted to kitchen vegetables, herbs, and fruits, thick with luxuriant flowers, every cottage rejoicing in floral color and perfume, every bit of frontage gay with flowers that seem to climb into the window boxes and spread themselves over walls and up the homely sides of cottage doors.

Such a garden was that which fronted Zaccheus Webb's cottage, which was by no means an ordinary cottage; it had two stories, and on the ground floor house-place and best parlor, besides front kitchens and back kitchens, and a stable wherein Zaccheus kept an old cob that was useful for hauling boats upon the dunes and bringing in coal from Yarmouth and other purposes. This also gave Zaccheus a good excuse for keeping a man to attend to the garden and do odd jobs afloat and ashore; and old Charity Dene, his housekeeper and domestic servant in general, took care to make that sea and stable help useful in both house and garden. It was as comfortable and well-ordered a home as you might find in a march of fifty miles, be the dwelling rich man's or poor; for Elmira was no sloven; she was just as house-proud as she was vain of her personal appearance; she lent a willing hand to Charity Dene, and was up and at work with the earliest lark that sang to the varied heavens that changed from gray to blue, from sun to darkness above the rolling dunes. The best parlor was her own special delight. Within a few months of the time when

David asked her to marry him, Zaccheus had added a spinet to its curious and miscellaneous furniture. He had brought it during a business cruise all the way from Boston in Lincolnshire, a relic probably of a home that had contributed its emigrants to the ships that had sailed thence and from the Netherlands to people Massachusetts. Once a week Mildred Hope had given Elmira a lesson upon the spinet, and already the precocious pupil could play a little tune all out of her own head. One day, to Mildred's astonishment, she sang the words, too, and with as pretty and dainty a grace as heart could desire, though Mildred would rather the ballad had been of a more serious turn than :

'Twas down in Cupid's garden
For pleasure I did go,
To see the fairest flowers
That in the garden grow.
The first it was a jessamine,
The lily, pink, and rose,
And surely they're the fairest flowers
That in the garden grows.

Mildred did not deny the aptness of the song's comparisons of girls and flowers, but she contended that there was an over-boldness on the part of the maiden, who, telling the stranger she meant to live a virgin and still the laurel wear, straightway changed her mind and made quick confession thereof :

Then hand in hand together
This lovely couple went,
Resolved was the sailor boy
To know her full intent—
To know if he would slighted be
When to her the truth he told ;
Oh, no ! oh, no ! she cried,
I love a sailor bold !
I love a sailor bold !

Mildred Hope's serious tone of mind was in revolt at Elmira's choice of ballads ; but Zaccheus Webb loved the old songs, and had sat in wonderment and delight at Elmira's performance, the more so when he was informed that she taught herself the song and the accompaniment too. There was a music store in Yarmouth, where Elmira had picked up several simply set songs and "Cupid's Garden" was a favorite ballad in Zack's youth ; indeed, he confessed to having sung it himself when first he knew Mira's dead and gone "mawther, rest her sawl!" Mildred took a pathetic interest in Elmira, and in a sad kind of way, in spite of David Keith's engagement to the girl, seemed to see Elmira in that denying maiden of the song, taking—with "No" still fresh upon her lips—the proffered hand of the sailor bold, and going straightway to perdition.

CHAPTER XXV.

"BREAKERS AHEAD!"

"So here you are at last," said Harry Barkstead, as David and Elmira pushed back the gate and entered Cupid's Garden.

"And you, too!" exclaimed Elmira. "Well, I never!" as if she rather answered than asked a question.

Harry threw the end of his cigar into the hedge and advanced to meet his two friends—his humble friends, as he would have expressed it in his secret heart, notwithstanding his apparent *bonhomie* and his frank and easy manners, his happy treatment of both as if they were on the most perfect equality.

"I saw your boat," he said, "and thought I might walk to Yarmouth with our friend David; my horse is at the hotel, and I enjoy a tramp across the dunes."

David fancied the explanation a little labored, but not the faintest idea of jealousy entered his boyish and trusting mind.

"Oh, indeed," said Elmira, with a little laugh—she had a way of laughing, a rippling, chirruping kind of way that David thought very fascinating—"and you have been waiting about all the afternoon to walk to Yarmouth with David Keith?"

"How do you mean, Miss Webb?" Harry asked, with something like a forced smile of amused interest.

"Do you think I did not see you bobbing up and down in the dunes an hour or two since?" she said, gathering a hollyhock leaf to fan herself with.

"Did you, now?" said Harry; "odd I did not see David?"

"Oh, I was waiting for Mira——"

"And had eyes for no one else; quite natural," said Harry.

"Is father home?" Elmira asked.

"No; Mrs. Dene expects him every moment, she tells me," Harry answered.

"Oh, you have seen her, then?" asked Elmira.

"Yes, thank you, and she offered me a drink. And how are you, David, my boy?"

Harry turned from Elmira to ask after David's health, and she watched the two with curious interest, taking her seat on the bench which Harry had quitted as they entered the garden.

"Never was better," said David, and then in a lower voice, "never was happier."

"Do you know that David is going to leave us?" Elmira asked, still fanning herself with the hollyhock leaf.

"Going to leave us!" exclaimed Harry.

"Secrets out of school," said David, shaking a long finger at Elmira with mock solemnity.

"Oh, I didn't know it was a secret any more," the girl replied, with her pretty tantalizing laugh.

"Nor is it, Mira, only I wanted to tell him all about it myself."

"Well, tell him while I go and see after the supper," she said rising, from her seat and throwing down the hollyhock leaf, which Harry picked up and proceeded to fan himself with it, at the same time remarking that "Nature's own fans are always the best, the beauties of the East prefer them, and the palm-leaf is, I believe, the accepted fan of Venus."

"I dare say," Elmira replied, with inconsequential emphasis.

"I fear I am intruding," Harry remarked, as the girl moved toward the cottage porch.

"Intruding," said Elmira, "after waiting so long—no, indeed!"

She laughed, in a half-scoffing kind of way, as she entered the cottage, and David and his friend could hear her say, "We have two guests for supper, Charity—and mind you treat them well, Master David Keith and young Squire Barkstead—I am going to change my dress, if it is worth while now that it's spoiled with pulk down on the beach where we landed like sillies—I feel a sorry maukin, I can tell you."

Little dialectic expressions on Elmira's lips had a fascinating sound both for David and Harry, and they were always thrown off in a half-apologetic way as if the girl would have them understand that she knew better, but would not seem too proud of her knowledge, since her father's language was full of the flavor of his Lincolnshire and east coast bringing up, his mother having been a Norfolk dairymaid, his father a sailorman from Grimsby.

"Miss Webb is hardly one to complain of the pulk and scum of the sea; what have you been about, David?" said Harry.

"She was not dressed for sailing, you see; she had been into Yarmouth and had not time to put on her sea-going gown," said David, with a blush suffusing his handsome open face, for something in Harry's manner jarred upon him.

"You are quite a gallant," said Harry, "and you ought to be very proud of having Miss Webb in such a hurry to join you that she has not time to change her dress."

"I don't quite know what you mean," said David.

"Oh, yes, you do; why, didn't you tell me just now that you were never happier?"

"Yes, and it is true, but you know I don't care to have my happiness nor Elmira's words treated lightly, as a matter for joking, I mean."

The boy flushed again, and hardly knew why. His instinct suggested that Harry was not quite respectful, not exactly in his words but in the manner of his utterance of them, and in the way he continued to fan himself with Elmira's discarded leaf.

"Oh, nonsense; why, David, what is the matter?" he said, "have a cigar till supper is ready, for we are both invited, you know."

Harry flung down the hollyhock leaf, thrust his hand into the breast pocket of his gray silk-lined jacket, and produced a cigar case.

"No, thank you," said David, "I smoke very seldom, and I can wait."

"Come, what have I said to anger you, David," asked Barkstead as he proceeded to light a cigar. "Not being hungry, my cigar will not spoil my supper, and I am only waiting for the pleasure of your company to Yarmouth."

"Well, I did not quite like what you said, or rather, it seemed to me very patronizing, and you know I can't stand that."

"My dear David, forgive me if anything I have said could really have hurt you; you of all others ought to know me better, old fellow—here, come, say you don't think so meanly of me, David; why, you dear, weak-minded, fine old fellow, shake hands and say you know I did not mean it whatever it was."

"Oh, all right, Harry," said David, taking the proffered hand, "I suppose I am supersensitive just now; I must be a fool to think you could willfully say anything to hurt me."

"Of course; come and sit down; what a lovely garden this is. Do you know it has been quite a rest to sit here and look at the flowers and combat their perfumes with the fumes of Raleigh's golden weed. I declare Ormesby Hall has nothing to show equal to these hollyhocks, nor to

those blush-roses that seem to take a positive delight in blooming and making a carpet as well for the butterflies to walk upon."

"You are quite poetic," said David, crowding his lanky person into the corner seat in the shadow of the weather-beaten figurehead.

"Oh, don't imagine you are the only fellow that appreciates Shakspere and the musical glasses," Harry answered. "But what is this about your going away, this secret out of school?"

"Oh, I'll tell you as we walk to Yarmouth," said David; "I'm too hungry to talk."

"That's right; when a fellow is hungry his head is level, and his heart is in the right place; I don't know any other cry that is so pleasant to satisfy as the cry of hunger. Well, let us go into the house and see what Mrs. Charity Dene has for supper."

He flung his cigar down upon Elmira's hollyhock leaf, and took David's arm in an almost affectionate way, and they sauntered along the box-edged path beneath the porch way that was laden with honeysuckle, and into the cottage.

Elmira went into her bedroom and lighted two candles in their old brass sconces on each side of the dressing-table. It was not dark. The sun had gone down, but the twilight was radiant with its after-glow. At the same time Elmira, after looking out for a moment upon the garden where the two young men were hidden behind the commanding figure of the dusky Venus, drew the curtains over her window, and then she needed the candles. She looked at herself in the mirror which they illuminated, and smiled; pushed her rich brown hair from her forehead, and then drew it back again; stepped a few yards from the glass so that she could see part of her dainty figure, and laughed again, not her regular rippling laugh but one of approval.

"My face may be a little red, but it is the heat; he need not have reminded me of it," she said. "Its very hot now."

She drew the curtains and undid the hatch of the window to let in the evening air. Then she put out her candles, drew the curtains back, and opened both the lead-glazed wings of her lattice and looked out, drawing in a long breath.

"I declare I feel faint, as the town girls say," she remarked. "Never knew what it was before; think I am bothered."

She saw the lights of ships at sea. The sun had left a red streak far away beyond them.

The crescent moon attracted her. It was sharp and bright now that the sun had gone. It shone like burnished silver, and there were a few stars here and there. They seemed to have a mist about them that made the moon look all the brighter.

"You look as if you were glad," she said, addressing the moon; "they say you can see and hear what lovers do and think. Eh, dear, but I wish I was free again! What is a girl to do who has nobody to confide in? Squire Barkstead is very handsome; well, so is David Keith—and there's no mistake about David, he loves me true, for sure! But I must go down; they'll think I have been doing myself up and making myself fine all this time. Mira, dear, what's the matter with you?"

She closed the window. "I feel as if I was dreaming," she said. She relighted the candles and drew the white dimity curtains, their brass rings making a homely music, and she began to hum the tune of "Cupid's Garden."

Then she took off her dress and donned another hardly less becoming, though it was of cotton stuff and brown; it had a short waist and short sleeves, leaving Mira's arms bare. She tied a blue ribbon round her neck and there

hung from it a tiny locket of yellow gold. It contained a lock of her mother's hair and a faded rose-leaf from a rose that Harry Barkstead had sent her in a valentine, "grown for her," as he said, "in the hothouse of his love." Did she know it was from Harry Barkstead? Oh, yes, he had confessed it one day when he was complimenting her father on the Caister roses. No, he had not confessed it right out, but when Zaccheus was lighting his pipe he had hummed the words to a familiar tune, and when Zaccheus looked up to listen he had said Miss Webb ought to learn that song.

Harry was one of those daring wooers who mean nothing serious and whom some women encourage to their cost.

As Elmira tripped down the darkened stairway into the house-place, her father was heard in the back regions of the cottage giving orders to Simeon, his man-of-all work, and presently in he came, bring with him whiffs of sea and land, a suggestion of fish and tobacco, and a generally breezy presence, as if a boat's crew had just landed in the cottage precincts.

"Mira, my gal, there you be!" he said, taking no notice of the others, "I thought I see yer as cummed across the meals, but it wern't, mek no doubt; so there yer be!"

He took her into his sea-jacketed arms and kissed her with a hearty smack, and then looked round about him. "Why, squire, this be good for sore eyes, and David, the lawyer, welcum; yer looks keinder kedgy, and that's how I'm feelin' mysen; and I reckon we can all peck a bit."

"But first you will have a wash, eh, father?" said Elmira.

"That's so," said Zaccheus, "fishin's not the cleanest trade, tho't mucks gowd as well as kibbage now and agen, thank the Lord!"

As he left the house-place his heavy boots clanked upon

the hard brick floor, and it seemed as if he filled the doorway. He was a big, burly, broad, nautical-looking man, a cross between coasting captain and beachman. Added to a wrinkled weather-beaten face, something the color of the dunes with streaks of red in it, he had a bright gray eye, a cheerful generous mouth, and a frank, honest, out-spoken manner; he grew his whiskers like a stiff fringe round his face; they joined his bushy dark hair that had only a few gleams of white in it; and he moved about with a cumbersome motion, something like a Dutch barge in shallow water.

Charity Dene had laid the cloth, and at the fire, going solemnly round and round upon a primitive jack, was a great joint of beef, and beneath it was a batter pudding, into which the gravy was dripping, making a rich luscious covering of the brown batter. Swinging over the fire in an iron pot were half a peck of potatoes in their skins, and in a smaller saucepan some fresh-shelled peas, grown in the straggling kitchen garden of the cottage.

David and Squire Barkstead sat near the low bay window upon an old cushioned seat, their heads now and then coming in contact with a score or two of fuschia and geranium plants that filled all the lower panes with a wealth of blooms. Elmira followed her father, and by the time Mrs. Dene had served the supper she returned with Zaccheus spruced up in a black coat with pockets at the side, a light-blue waistcoat and white stock, and in ordinary boots, now looking the well-to-do smack owner to the life.

"You'n come fortitnet," said Mrs. Dene, addressing David and the squire; "we'n cooked this to be cawd for remainder the week, Mira thowt it mought be hot for the Mester and Mester Keith like."

"I'm always fortunate, Mrs. Dene, when I come to the cottage," said Harry, placing a chair for Elmira, in his ready and courtly way, at least Elmira thought it was

courtly, and she knew that Harry went into the highest society in London town.

"Thank you," she said, making a little courtesy, "but I am going to draw the ale."

"No, Miss Mira, I'll do it, and thank ye," said Charity; "sit ye down, please, wi' company."

Elmira accordingly took the seat which Harry had placed for her by his side, and David sat with Zaccheus at the other end of the table.

Before Charity came to the cottage—and she had been housekeeper and general there for over five years—the previous domestic had sat down to table with Zaccheus and Elmira, but from the first Mrs. Dene knew her place and took pride in doing honor to her service as she said, and loved to think of Elmira as her young mistress who was just as much a lady as the finest in the land, "if larnin' and accomplishments counted." On this occasion Charity was unusually formal, handing round the plates and filling up the tumblers with quite an air; and Zaccheus felt, as he told Elmira afterward, as if he was "hevin' his dinner at old Norfolk Arms on market-day, so slick and nimble did she fisherate for all; it fairly bet him for sure."

After supper Harry led the conversation into melodious grooves, talked of old songs and the concert that had been given at Yarmouth. Zaccheus Webb confessed that he gloried in the old ballads, and "nothin' culd mek time go more easy-like and free than a good song, leastways when you'd gotten a spinnet in the house and a gel as could play it to a moral."

Elmira persisted that she had no ear for music and couldn't play the spinnet more than a goose; Mildred Hope, she said, knew that well enough, for Mildred had been trying to teach her this twelve months and could make nothing of it.

"Why, Mildred only told me one day last week that you

were getting on finely," said David, "and I thought you sung that song about 'The Waterman,' a week since this very evening, beautifully."

"Yes, you are very kind," said Elmira, "I know you did, but you would say that if I didn't, just to please me."

"Well, I dunno 'bout that," said Zaccheus, "but, my eyes, I reckon you'd be hard to beat at 'Cupid's Garding,' and I says that a-knowin' it this forty year and, as Justice Barkstead ud say, that's evidence."

"Won't you oblige us, Miss Webb," said Harry.

"Why, you see, parlor's locked up, hasn't been open this three days, didn't mean to open it till Sunday, when we expect the Prison Visitor to come and join us in a hymn."

"Indeed. I wish I might have the honor of being present," said Harry.

"Don't sneer," said Elmira quickly, "you needn't, for it's lovely to hear Mildred Hope sing, and if you could hear her tune her voice to a song, you wouldn't forget it in a hurry; 'Home, Sweet Home,' for example."

"My dear Miss Webb, I did not intend to sneer; I am sure I beg the little prison visitor's pardon."

"And on her behalf I accept your apology," said David, laughing; "she is a neighbor of mine, you know; Miss Mumford is a friend of hers."

"She's very fond of you," said Elmira, with her rippling laugh.

"All the girls are fond of David," said Harry.

"That's a good un," remarked Zaccheus, as he filled his pipe, "that's a good un for you, Master Keith, what do you say to that?"

"I feel honored, of course," said David, slightly embarrassed; "it's a compliment to have the good opinion of the girls."

"That's true," said the smack owner; "I was never agen

um in my time, and I knaws one as is worth her weight in gold ; doan't I, Mira, my gel?"

"Yes, father, dear ; anyhow, she knows that you are worth your weight in the finest gold that was ever smelted."

"Very well, then, sing us 'Cupid's Garding' and play it on that there spinnet, and we'll all join chorus, eh, Master Keith?"

"Yes," said David.

"Shall I light the candles?" asked Mrs. Dene, who had been taking in the conversation as she had taken off the cloth and removed the supper things.

"Yes," said Elmira ; and presently they all adjourned to the little parlor, all except Zaccheus, who said he'd sit near by, "as he moughtn't tek pipe in thar, not as he wanted, leifer he'd sit by and when chorus come he'd reckon to mek himsen heard ;" and sure enough he did.

Elmira sang in a mirthful, pleasant fashion, with a nice appreciation of the words, and, for so brief a studentship, with a fair aptitude in the way of accompaniment. There was a smell of old lavender and country fustiness in the room that seemed to go well with the music. The pictures on the walls had their frames bound round with tissue paper. There were lusters on the mantel shelf that jingled to the vibrations of the spinnet. Mrs. Dene and Elmira's father remained just outside the door, Zaccheus in his arm-chair which Mrs. Dene had wheeled up for him, Mrs. Dene with her arms beneath her apron, and her mouth open with curiosity and pleasure.

When Elmira had sung her little song and Zaccheus and the rest had joined in the chorus and afterward loudly applauded the performer, Harry Barkstead sat down and astonished the company with a dreamy kind of waltz that seemed to set their feet a-going, and as if by way of bedevilment, then gave them the "Manchester Angel," with all the

pathos of which the refrain is capable, and somehow Elmira felt that when in the minor key he dwelt upon the words, "There lives the girl for me," he had her in his mind; indeed, he looked at her when he had finished; she felt as if his eyes went through her.

"Is that a challenge to Mildred Hope!" David asked, not willing that the impression Harry had created should remain without some kind of protest.

"If you like," said Harry, laughing, "I did not know that the prison visitor sang it, or I would not have been so bold."

"Tell yer it's not same thing as prison visitir sings, her'n is 'Home Sweet Home,' and if she'd tuned it off she'd a med a hymn on it. Eh, Mira?"

"Yes," said Elmira, "will you not sing another, Mr. Barkstead? and you play so well I'm quite ashamed that I played at all."

"You need not be, Elmira," said David promptly.

"Truly, no indeed; it is I who should feel ashamed," said Harry, "but somehow when songs are going I am like Captain Webb, I must chime in."

"That's reight, squire, that's so," said Zaccheus, "now't like a good song."

The squire was at length tempted to sing one more song, and Zaccheus said it was too doleful for anything, "like song old cow died of, lodging on cold ground, indeed should think that was place for such like," and the old fisherman laughed heartily as he pressed a glass of spirits on his guests, spirits as had never known derelict hand of sizeman on it, and yet had come from over the water. The young squire undertook to join the old man in a glass and Zaccheus hoped "as Harry's lodging nor hisn for that matter ud ever be on that there cold ground."

David hoped before he parted with Elmira on this eventful night to have had a word or two with her father, but he

found no opportunity; instead of unburdening his mind and explaining his plans to Zaccheus he made a confidant of Harry. He could hardly help himself.

When they were fairly on the highroad tramping to Yarmouth, Harry again referred to David's impulsive reference to his happiness as well as his health, and David out with it, his unexpected fortune, his proposal to Elmira, her acceptance of his unworthy hand, and his vague but glorious schemes of a future that might lead him anywhere. He intimated that he might take a long spell of travel, even have a yacht of his own, and a crew with a long gun and a masked battery in case of need; for David had read of pirates; and besides peace was hardly restored between England and her many enemies, and who knew that an adventurous yacht away down in the Mediterranean or in the Pacific might not be signaled by some daring cruiser.

If David talked a little wildly it was because Harry encouraged him, and for the reason that David was very happy, pulsating with romance, and proud as if he had captured a lovely princess from some pirate's lair. Harry envied the lad his high spirits, his hopeful nature, his purpose in life; and furthermore, he thought he had never seen Elmira look so bewitching as on that night, nor could he make any mistake, he thought, about the significant pressure of the hand she gave him in response to his own, after David had, as he thought, said good-night to her in a particularly ostentatious manner, even kissing her, he believed, while Harry turned to say good-night to Zaccheus Hitherto he had patronized David—whose acquaintance he had made originally through Petherick and a letter of introduction from David's London trustee—but to-night David seemed to patronize him.

Moreover, David strode along the highway with a swing that irritated Harry, who was not in that kind of mood. The sedgy dikes fairly danced past them as they pounded

along, for Harry did not care to lag though he felt like it. To everybody they met David wished a cheery good-night, and was self-assertive, Harry felt, in every possible way that might jar upon the young county gentleman with his Oxford education and his stud at Melton, the more so that hitherto David had seemed to accept Harry's friendship as an honor as well as a pleasure. This was true enough, for there was as a rule a modest diffidence in David's manner, and he was really fond of Harry, admired him for his knowledge of the world, his athletic powers, and his fine natural manners. But on this night David was walking on air. He had won the girl of his heart. She had said yes to his momentous question, and he expected Harry Barkstead, his friend, and once in a way his companion, to rejoice with him, to clap him on the back, as it were, and shake hands with him, to tell him he was to be envied, and so on; and it was only when they steamed into town hot, not to say panting, that David felt somehow that Harry did not quite feel the pleasure he affected, when at last he said, "Well, old chap, I must congratulate you, and wish you all the happiness you can desire."

It was coldly offered, and before David could reply Harry said, "Come into the Royal and join me in a stirrup-cup, I see my groom waiting for me; it's a glorious night for a ride.'

"No, thank you, Harry, not to-night; I shall be waited for also, and I am rather late."

"Late," said Harry, "it is only half-past nine."

"That's late for Miss Mumford, and I want to have a chat with her before she goes to bed."

"Well, good-night then," said Harry; and so they parted, each thinking of Elmira Webb; David not for a moment suspecting the selfish jealousy that had taken possession of the sensual soul of Sir Anthony Barkstead's unscrupulous son.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MILDRED HOPE.

A CORNER house on the South Quay. The front door is in a short street, looking upon the old town hall. The short street leads into Middlegate. Next door is the Royal Oak where sailors come to drink and meet skippers on the look-out for new hands. A quaint old tavern with a bit of garden in front and red blinds to its small square panel windows. The old house (not the tavern) extends round the corner upon the quay. To-day it is fronted by a rail-road, running between the highway and the ships. In the days of David Keith the vessels were loaded or unloaded by the aid of carts and wagons. To-day there are steamers moored to the quay, and on the other side of the docked river there are great flour warehouses and other important buildings. In David's boyhood the outlook consisted of sailing ships, coasters, barges, picturesque sheds in the foreground, and in the distance a windmill with gray timbers and great swinging sails, such as Don Quixote tilted at in the famous Spanish romance. Along the quay foreign sailors went to and fro, and fishermen with clusters of fish on a string, contributions from the day's catch for the "mawther's" supper.

The old house was Petherick's office. The owner's name was set forth on a brass plate that shone like the sun. The room with the bay window overlooking the quay was the general office, in which David Keith had a desk all to himself. Frequently he had the room all to himself, to read his books, other than legal treatises, or to sit and watch the ships as they came and went, moored to the quay for a

time, presently to disappear, and make their way out of the river at Gorleston, into the North Sea, whence David pictured them in all weathers on their varied journeys.

He gave them many and strange adventures; sent them plowing their way into unknown seas; had them captured by pirates, and their crews sold into slavery; sent them out sometimes with masked batteries and wonderful sailing powers to meet an enemy, who had counted on an easy capture, to be himself taken as a prize. He sat upon his tall desk, pen in hand, but he was far away in imagination; and since the news about Newfoundland, he looked further afield and with more certainty of latitude and longitude; for he had consulted the office atlas and found both Heart's Delight and St. John's, and, furthermore, he had talked to sailormen who had traded to those seas; knew the Atlantic, and could tell grim stories of Labrador and Demon's Isle.

Miss Mumford now found him keen on every point that belonged to Newfoundland and his father's history, and Mildred Hope would look in upon Sally and her foster lad, as she loved to call him, and help David to cross-examine Miss Mumford concerning her many and curious experiences. Mildred Hope lived in two rooms in Hartley's Row close by Miss Mumford's house.

Mildred, though but a few years older than David, was well-known in Yarmouth. Among the poor she was as familiar a figure as the bellman or Zaccheus Webb, the smack owner. Mildred was a remarkable young woman. She was an orphan, and known in the town as "the prison visitor." She lived on an annuity of fifty pounds a year, which she augmented by working embroidery and teaching the rudiments of music. She was of a distinctly religious turn of mind, but belonged to no sect or denomination; she worshiped in every church, even deigning to attend Mass occasionally at the little Catholic chapel.

If there had been a Friend's Meeting House in Yarmouth

she would to all outward appearance have looked most at home there, for she dressed very much in the Quaker fashion and never varied it, except to don for Sundays and feasts and celebrations a superior texture of gown to that she wore every day, once in a way appearing in silk. She usually wore a dove-colored gray dress, and a small straw bonnet with dove-colored strings tied beneath her chin. She was under the average height, and small in figure, neat, dainty, and of comely presence. Her face was pale ; she had large, soft gray eyes, soft flaxen hair bound close to her small well-shaped head, wore strong, laced, thick-soled shoes, and generally carried a rather capacious reticule, in which there were tracts, sewing implements, a packet of sweets known as bull-eyes, and a small leathern purse. She was born at Caister, but on the death of her mother had gone to live in Hartley's Row, where she rented the two upper rooms in a tradesman's house, and became the attached neighbor of Miss Mumford, and deeply interested in the work and welfare of David Keith.

Mildred Hope was seventeen when she felt the philanthropic impulse which absorbed her young life ; she was only twenty-five when the reader makes her acquaintance ; yet she had done much to reform the cruel discipline of the local prisons, and had earned for herself more than a local celebrity.

Miss Mumford never tired of talking with Mildred, and David often sat and listened to her, but, for his ambition, her views of life were too restricted in their scope and purpose. She had found her mission, as many another priestess and apostle of charity had before and since, in a casual visit to a church with open doors that invited her to enter in. She was walking from Caister to Yarmouth on a summer day in her eighteenth year, and went into the House of God. The preacher took his text from the Corinthians, and the words were, " We persuade men."

She was deeply impressed with the homily. It went straight to her soul, she said, in one of her talks with Miss Mumford ; she felt as if God spoke to her and warned her of the slavery of sin in which she had hitherto been living ; and from that moment she began to feel that she had a mission, that Christ inspired her to do the duty that was nearest. She began to visit the aged and the sick, the fatherless and widows ; she obtained permission to go into the workhouse and read to the poor. On Sundays she taught in Sunday schools.

For a time opposing denominations declined her services ; but she did so much good, her life was in itself such a gracious lesson of piety and benevolence, that she found her way wherever she would.

There was no dogma in Mildred's teaching. She preached Christ, not in pulpits, but at firesides, in garrets, in pauper wards, and at last in the miserable and ill-kept jail. The old toll house prison was in those days one of the worst probably of the houses of punishment and detention that any prison reformer could have visited. It had no chaplain, no schoolmaster. There was no divine service of any kind on Sundays. The only relief which the prisoners had from their miserable condition lay in the fact that they herded together, and visitors were admitted to them with little or no restriction. Possibly this was one of the worst features, however, of the general lack of discipline. Without it, however, the place might have developed into a lunatic asylum.

The Russians of to-day know what solitary confinement will do ; and in their banding of prisoners together they still maintain the system, or want of it, which disgraced our own houses of detention at the time when Mildred Hope took upon herself the onerous duties of prison visitor at Yarmouth. The cells were below ground, dark and unventi-

lated, over-poweringly hot in summer, chilly and damp in winter.

Many a time before Mildred had summoned up courage enough to ask for admission, she had longed to go in and read to such prisoners as might listen to her, in the intervals of their gaming and drinking and cursing and swearing. At last she was admitted to see a poor woman who was incarcerated for cruelty to a child. The woman had given way to a passionate rather than cruel nature, and received the unexpected ministrations of Mildred with bitter but grateful tears. The visitor read to her, as she informed Miss Mumford, "the twenty-third chapter of St. Luke, the story of the malefactor, who albeit suffering from man's judgment, and that justly, found mercy from the Savior." Encouraged by this first visit she went again and again, and after rebuffs and difficulties of many kinds she became a regular visitor at the prison, and obtained a wonderful influence over the prisoners. Something like an improved discipline grew up with the better conduct of the delinquents; and after two or three years of persistent work Mildred, perceiving that idleness in the prison, as well as out of it, was a fruitful source of vice, devised plans of employment for both men and women. A townsman gave her a sovereign toward her prison charities, and with this, and a contribution from her own scant purse, she bought materials for work, taught the women to sew, helped the men in the same direction, and in time took in materials and brought them out manufactured articles, which she sold for the benefit of the prisoners, many of whom in this way on being discharged found themselves in possession of little sums of money to start life with, and what was more, the means of earning a livelihood. A fund was founded to help the little prison visitor, but it fell far short of her desires, and she longed to enlarge her field of operations. She often parted with her last shilling, and pinched herself

for food that she might help a poorer sister, or send some comfort to some sick man who was unable to help himself.

The tracts which Mildred distributed were not of the usual pattern. She wrote them herself. A kindly disposed printer gave her credit, so that she need not check her work for the immediate want of funds. They were very short homilies, friendly words of advice, contained no threats of hell, made no difficulties in the way of repentance and forgiveness.

It was from these humble, kindly, generous leaflets, gospels of good conduct and honest lives, gospels of true hearts and cleanly living, gospels of rewards not only in heaven, but on earth—it was from these leaflets that she taught many of her ragged, dissolute, wretched pupils to read ; and to many a poor creature they were Notes on the Bank of Prosperity and Happiness, these simple pages, issued by the sympathetic Yarmouth printer.

"I was often penniless, fireless, supperless," she told Miss Mumford, "but I knew that God had called me into the Vineyard, saying, whatever is right I will give you. I felt that God was my master, that I was his servant, and he would not forsake me. I knew also that it sometimes seems good in his sight to try the faith and patience of his servants by bestowing upon them very limited means of support—as in the case of Naomi and Ruth, of the widow of Zarephath and Elijah—and my mind in the contemplation of such trials seemed exalted by more than human energy ; for I had counted the cost and my mind was made up. If while imparting truth to others, and helping those who groaned in poverty and sin, I became exposed to temporal want, the privation, so momentary to an individual, would not admit of comparison with following the Lord and thus administering to others. Besides, I had fifty pounds a year—think of it! And I could nearly make

another by embroidery and teaching. I was rich, I had enough for food and clothes, what else does anyone want? And I could give the remainder to those who needed it, women in distress and tribulation, starving children, men dying of prison pestilence and the famine that comes of drink and crime, and no knowledge of the Savior.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DAVID KEITH AT HOME IN HARTLEY'S ROW.

SINCE she had come to live in Hartley's Row, Mildred's relaxation was in her neighborly visits to Miss Mumford's house in the corner, a model home, clean as a pink, with relics of the sea and a little library of books, some of which Mildred thought a trifle worldly, but with all her religious faith and conduct, she had a liberal mind and found relaxation in the best literature of the time.

She often went home to her own two little rooms with David's bright, cheerful face in her mind and his adventurous words in her memory. David talked to her with a sense of confidence and without restraint, and he told her many stories of the great world as he had read them in his miscellaneous books that interested her, and seemed to give her rest. She would often, when saying good-night, remark that David had done her good, rested her mind, giving it a pleasant change in taking it from thoughts of the sorrowful scenes that might await her on the morrow.

David liked Mildred very much. There was something soothing, he would say, in the prison visitor's manner, her voice was soft and sweet, and she had eyes that got over a fellow, so to speak. He did not wonder at the influence she possessed at the old toll house and among the poor, not to mention the fishermen, who actually went to her to say a prayer for them before putting out in stormy weather, or when the signs of the harvest of the sea were dubious.

"Do you know," said David one day, "that the prison visitor is really pretty?"

"She's comforting," was Miss Mumford's reply.

"I say she's pretty, Sally, dear. I saw her trudging away on the road from Caister. She did not see me. I walked behind her ever so far. She pounded along. Do you know she has big heavy shoes? At least they looked big on her small feet. They were laced up like mine, and she had blue worsted stockings; wears her petticoats short you know, so that she can get along. She stopped in the road to take out her packet of bull's-eyes and give some to a little boy and his sister; and just then I came up, and said, 'Please, Miss Mildred, may I not have one?' I said it in an assumed voice, you know, and when she turned round to see who it was, why she fairly blushed, and looked uncommonly pretty."

"Really," said Miss Mumford.

"Yes, really! You know how pale she is as a rule; they say that's with spending so much time in the bad air of the toll house prison—I wish she wouldn't. Well, I tell you, she blushed; her cheeks were pink, and her eyes were bright as——"

"Elmira Webb's!" said Miss Mumford a trifle slyly.

"Oh, well, altogether different, you know. Of course, Mira's eyes are the most beautiful in the world. Besides, the prison visitor's are gray, and Mira's are dark. What made you say that, Sally?"

David broke off in the midst of his account of meeting Mildred, feeling that Sally meant something more than appeared in her question.

"Oh, nothing that I know of, David," said his foster-mother.

"I believe you don't like Mira," he said.

"Not as well as Mildred," said Sally.

"Mildred! Why that's a different matter altogether. I like Mildred, of course, everybody does; but altogether in a different way from Mira Webb."

"Yes, of course," said Sally, "but what did Mildred say?"

"Oh, she said nothing for a minute, but just gave me a bull's-eye and blushed."

"Are you sure she blushed?" asked Sally, more for the sake of saying something than with any special intention in her question, "was it not the warmth of her walk?"

"I was going to tell you, Sally, dear, after she had blushed and I thought for the first time in my life how pretty she was, she began to tell me about Mira; she had been giving Mira a lesson on the spinet, and she said Mira would one day be able to play and sing quite well, though she confessed it was not easy to get nice songs, and, of course, that Mira did not care much for hymns. 'Why, I should think not,' I said, 'not for general use, you know. I should not want to go to Webb's to hear Mira sing hymns.'"

"I don't know," said Sally, "Mildred Hope sings hymns till she makes me cry, they are so lovely."

"But I don't want to cry—why, here is the prison visitor," he said, as Mildred lifted the latch, and in a sweet, small voice asked: "May I come in?"

"Why, of course," said David, flinging the door wide open.

"Oh, Master David, it is you; you are home early."

"Yes," said David, "I haven't much time now before I sail, and I want to spend as much of it with dear Mother Sally and Mira, as I can possibly afford."

"Of course you do," said Mildred, as she patted the back of Sally's brown hand, which was extended to her by way of welcome. "I met Miss Webb this afternoon; she was shopping for Sunday, she said, and asked me to accept a pound of tea for some of my poor women."

"How good of her," said David, "but she has a kind heart. Zaccheus says the world don't contain a kinder, though he allowed the prison visitor was a good little 'mawther, and true as compass, mek no doubt.'"

"Ah, I only wish I was worthy of all the kind things people are good enough to say to me," replied Mildred, taking a seat by the window, undoing her reticule, and taking out a piece of unfinished embroidery.

"Now, my dear neighbor," said Sally, "that's just a bit like what they calls pride as apes humility, for sure."

"Is it?" said Mildred, "then I won't say it again. What I mean, Master David, is that I would like to do a thousand times more than I do, to have more strength, more ability, and more money to take in, oh, such a field of duty! But one must be content."

"You are quite ambitious in your way," said David, "I am, too; we all are, you know."

"And what is your particular ambition, Master David?" Mildred asked.

"Just at this moment my ambition is to taste the fish Miss Mumford has for tea, and the cakes to follow," said David, laughing, "and, if you will excuse me, I will wash my hands and change my jacket."

"You will stay to tea?" remarked Sally, interrogatively.

"Yes, dear, that is what I came for, besides the pleasure of seeing you," said Mildred, smiling.

"Ah, my dear lass, that's what I like in you—it is making yerself at home and saying what you mean. I'll be sore put to it when David's gone, but it'll be a comfort to have you come in."

"When does he go?" Mildred asked, plying her needle as Sally went in and out from parlor to kitchen, assisting her single domestic to dish up the dinner-tea that was an institution of the Row.

"Why, at the end of the month; sails from Bristol to Halifax, where he is to meet the London trustee, who sailed this week, and who will go with him to St. John's. Eh, dear, I can't tell you how badly I feel at thought of parting with him; and I blame myself that I don't go with him, which,

however, he won't hear of ; says it would make him look silly, and as if he had to be tied to my apron strings, and the like ; and now that he's engaged to Elmira Webb, and talks of marriage, he has come to be masterful ; well, of course, that's to be expected of a high-spirited lad who's growing into manhood."

"He will make Elmira Webb a very good husband, forbearing and affectionate," said Mildred.

"That he will ; but she isna worthy of him—good looks ! Yes, that may be, but too fond of fall-alls, and calculated to make a proud lad jealous."

"Do you think so ?"

"I am sure so," said Sally, "but what are you to do when a lad's heart is engaged, and when you love him that well you don't like to give him a minute's pain ? but eh, my dear, it will be a sad day, I fear me, for David Keith when he teks Elmira Webb for better or worse."

It was a cozy room, with an outlook along the court-like yard of the upper end of Hartley's Row, the door opening flush upon the white pavements, the kitchen having a red bricked yard at the back ; all the windows full of flowers in red-raddled pots ; flags and rushes in the parlor fireplace ; tall brass candlesticks and colored ornaments on the tall mantelshelf ; an old flint gun, a pair of pistols and a pike fixed upon brackets on the clean and whitewashed wall ; here and there an engraving in a black frame ; a case or two of stuffed birds ; and a case or two of fish ; in one corner a glazed bookcase ; in the middle of the room a round table with a polished top, now covered with gold and white china cups and saucers, and white plates ; a tall copper urn uttering a kind of purring sound, and emitting little puffs of steam. On one side of the room a large soft well-stuffed sofa ; on the other a small sideboard flanked with high-backed old oak chairs.

"You must always have been a good housekeeper," said

Mildred, as Sally placed upon the table a dish of deliciously fried mackerel flanked with bunches of fennel, and accompanied by a sauce that seemed to address an invitation to the board.

"Ready, David," said Sally, opening the staircase door and calling to David, who came hurrying down in a loose serge jacket and trousers, with a white handkerchief tied in a sailor's knot about his neck, and looking the beau ideal of a strong and happy young Englishman.

"Now, Miss Hope," he said, offering her a chair and taking one himself opposite to Sally, "do you like fennel sauce? That's right, I knew there would be fennel sauce, I smelt it the moment I came in. What a fine thing it is to be hungry, eh?"

"When you have no difficulty in getting the food you want," said Mildred, taking from David a plate of fish, while Sally poured out the tea.

"Yes, of course," said David, "it makes one feel selfish to think that there are people who can't get bread let alone mackerel, fennel sauce, and hot cakes to follow—and such cakes! I wish everybody could have all they want; but as that is impossible we must be forgiven for taking what the Lord provides as you would say, Miss Hope."

David was in great spirits. He ate his food with a relish, praised it, pressed more upon Mildred, complained that Miss Mumford was not enjoying her tea, and when the repast was over announced that he was off to Caister; he not only wanted to see Mira, but he looked to have a talk with Zaccheus about the Bristol ship in which he was to sail to Halifax and St. John's.

"David takes after both his father and his mother," said Sally, when the boy had started off on his walk to Caister, "but he's got his father's hankering after adventure; it was that as induced his grandfather Plympton to have him educated for the law, thinking as it would keep him to his

moorings ; but he forgot as the sea makes it natural for a lad to desire to roam. It was marryin' as kept his father at home and would ha' done, but for the persecution that Heart's Delight was subject to, and which didn't stop short there but followed on to Heart's Content ; eh, it's long ago, but it seems like yesterday ! David was an infant in arms ; I hear as there's great changes since, that settlers may till the ground and build of brick, as some has done, where brick's to be gotten ; it's a pity life's so short a span ; it's hard when folks that's borne heat and sweat of it has to mek room for them as comes in for the fruits of their labor and suffering."

Miss Mumford went on talking to herself and Mildred, while she and the servant were putting the tea-things away and making the room tidy. Mildred sat on the little sofa, at work upon her embroidery, but she gave full attention to Sally's thoughts and reminiscences.

"I wish I could see fair prospects for David," said Sally, closing the kitchen door on the domestic, folding up her apron, and placing it in a little press beneath the stairway, "'hansum is as 'ansum does' they say in Lincolnshire, and I wish I could feel a real bit of honest faith in Miss Elmira Webb."

"Her father loves her to blindness of every fault," said Mildred ; "such a girl without the guiding love of a mother is at a great disadvantage in a sinful world, and is much to be pitied."

"It isna a matter of religion as I'm thinkin' on," said Sally. "I've knowed good, honest folk who might be ca'd anything but religious ; why, our David is hard to get to chapel once a Sunday ; maybe that's on account of his father and mother being Catholics, though his father was nothing when first he came to Heart's Delight ; first Mass he went to was for her sake ; I do believe he'd been a Mahomedun or a Hottentot if she'd ha' been of that way of thinkin', he loved her to that desperation."

"I don't hold with an outward neglect of religion, even if there is a natural inward and spiritual grace," said Mildred, "I think, if only for example's sake, the Lord's day should be observed; not that souls may not be saved that never prayed in church or chapel; whatever our creed, we are all worshiping God, and I don't think he will take particular note of the manner of the worship if our conduct goes hand in hand with our religious professions."

"There be some," Sally replied, "who count to be saved by faith; but I believe in deeds, Mildred, and I am sure you do."

"Faith and deeds," Mildred replied, "always remembering the rightful and diligent use of the talents with which the Master entrusts his servants."

"Do you ever think of marrying?" Sally asked, suddenly arresting Mildred's needle in the very heart of a silken rose.

"It is a strange question," Mildred replied, with the slightest tinge of color in her pale cheeks; and so it was, having regard to the nun-like appearance of the girl. It has been already noted that she dressed in a very simple fashion, suggesting the Quaker garb; it was also convent-like in its simplicity. There was that calm resignation in the expression of the girl's face that is mostly seen in the countenance of devout sisters who have given their lives to Holy Church, and yet it was an inviting calmness, not in the least austere. The deep, dark eyes were full of a sympathetic light, the well-formed mouth generous in its outline, the lips red, and the most fashionable beauty might have envied Mildred's white and regular teeth. Her voice was sweet and musical, and for poor people had a kind of fascination that belongs to a well-played reed instrument. When she prayed, as she did now and then at some public assembly, such as the occasional congregation of sailors on a Sunday evening, on the beach before the fishing, her soul

was in her words. Her supplications rose and fell with the cadence of a lovely chant; yet in her relationship with the people and with her friends she had, as we have seen, none of the sanctity of manner or conversation that carried even an unconscious rebuke to the most sinful. She was on frank and familiar terms with all the coast, and the respect she received on all hands was not in any way lessened by her free and happy manner.

Sally Mumford was in a peculiar mood. Her remarks made Mildred watchful and somewhat on her guard.

"I never married because I had a mission. I was married to my duty. David was my mission, God bless him as he blessed his saintly mother. But why shouldn't you marry, Mildred?"

"I am also married to my duty," said Mildred, looking up at Miss Mumford with a questioning, wistful expression in her eyes.

"But marriage need not hinder your work. Oh, to see you and David come together!"

Mildred felt her heart almost stop beating as she bent her head over her embroidery, not daring to look up.

"David is fond of you; he'll get tired of yonder Caister gel!"

"Why are you saying these things?" Mildred asked, her lips slightly parted as she looked into Sally's calm face.

"Because my heart prompts me," said Sally.

"I wonder why your heart dictates such thoughts?"

"Because it loves you, Mildred, and because it beats night and day for David Keith, its one hope and love. Eh, dear, I don't know what's come over me this night—seems as if I feared some harm's going to happen David, and seems as if you could save him!"

"Let us pray for him, Sally dear, and ask God and the Savior for guidance," replied Mildred, as she rose and put her arms around the trim old spinster.

They knelt together by the chair in which Sally had been sitting, knelt hand in hand, and each offered up a silent prayer which was more the outcome of a sudden emotion than an act of worship or petition. Their hearts were full to overflowing with a tender solicitude that naturally found vent in prayer. The impulse and the motive were inspired by thoughts of David Keith's imminent voyage across the Atlantic.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"THE MAD ENGLISHMAN OF VENICE."

Two ruins. The first almost human in its time-worn aspect, its blind windows, its broken columns. The second entirely human, the living wreck of a man. The first a decayed palace with a brave and brilliant history. The second a man, battered by cruel blows of fate, aged before his time, but with the windows of his soul still undimmed, except for here and there a film that had come from the shedding of many tears.

The marble ruin was not entirely desolate. It had a custodian, one who had known it when its echoes resounded to the laugh and shout of triumph and festival. The human ruin was alone, solitary in the great world. In its pinched and wounded heart lay the everlasting difference between the dead ruin and the living; it was the well-spring of hope that keeps green some sunny spot in the dreariest past and freshens the most arid forecasts of the future.

At the date of this romance, Yriarte, the historian, will tell you that visitors to Venice must have remarked in passing down the Grand Canal an ancient building with its open loggia on the first story, ornamented with marble columns, having Byzantine capitals. The antique façade, set with slabs of Greek marble and encrusted with circular escutcheons, was falling into ruin, its interstices choked with earth and moss. Here and there trailing vines and varied creepers had taken root in floor and crevice, giving that touch of leaf and flower that always arrests the attention wherever it is observed among the halls and palaces of this city in the sea. The Turkish custodian still lived there and

might be seen leaning against the last arch of the loggia, a type of Eastern immobility, indifferent to the gondolas passing and repassing under his eyes, looking, but seeing nothing. "A poet who did not know that placidity of the Oriental, which looks like dreaming and yet is so dreamless, might have imagined that he read a look of wistfulness in this man's eyes, and that the forlorn warder was thinking of the ancient glories of Venice."

In these present days, if you would see with the eyes of the historian and follow the adventures of the hero of Heart's Delight, you must look back through the spick and span facings of the palace that have blotted out the resting place of the prisoner of Tafilet. There are Venetians still living who knew the old palace and its picturesque custodian. The stones are fresh that have been piled on the ancient foundations, and the present writer has moored his gondola by the steps on the Grand Canal, and talked with an old Venetian who had known the stranger whom they called "the mad Englishman."

This building was the old Fondaco dei Turchi, predecessor of the new palace, built in the thirteenth century. The present building is supposed to be a reproduction of the blind old house which had for its custodian the dreamy Oriental. Three hundred years after the splendid entertainments that the lords of Briare gave there, the palace became the residence of the Turkish merchants and dealers, and it was in its last days of decreptitude and picturesque misery when Alan Keith begged for shelter at the hands of the meditative Turk.

They were well met these three—the blinking Oriental in the shadow of the crumbling palace and the half-demented seafarer who had been landed by a Spanish ship to take his chances of life and death in Venice. There was something almost inarticulate in the woes of the three. The palace spoke to the human fancy in whispers of parasite leaves

that held many of the marble stones together. The custodian addressed the Englishman, but to Alan it was in the embarrassing tongue of France. Alan replied in a gutteral English that was full of recollections of the Scottish vernacular, with now and then a smattering of French words and Spanish, such French, however, as might have been English to the Turk, who could only guess at the stranger's meaning. There was, however, between the two human ruins a sympathetic language which they could not mistake. They both belonged to the miserable. They had both seen strange adventures; they were both old; they were both poor. Poverty knows its fellow. The custodian of the decaying palace clung to the old walls for love, and not for wages. Alan had about him the few gold and silver coins that some philanthropic Spaniard had given him when obtaining his release from the Moorish dungeon. Elsewhere he had treasure in abundance, away on the silent shores of the secret waterways of Wilderness Creek; always supposing that the cemetery had remained undisturbed except by wind and weather.

During all the days of his imprisonment Alan had never forgotten any circumstance connected with his life at Heart's Delight. Dropped down off Labrador blindfolded he felt that he could steer into the silent harbor whence the cunning vengeance of Lester Bentz had driven him and his comrades to fall victims to the English ship of war. When some unknown power had come to the aid of the prisoners at Tafilet he had selected to be put ashore at Venice, feeling that of all cities in the world he might there possibly still have a friend. He remembered the young priest's talk of Venice as his home, of the probability of his removal thither, and that he had a mother living in Florence.

More than twenty years had gone by since then, and Father Lavello might be dead. He might, however, have left behind him some friend upon whom he could count for

advice and help. Twenty years was long in the memory of friendship, but short in the memory of a foe ; and Alan knew not to what extent his name might be branded with the penalties of treason and crime, with piracy and murder, in the annals of British justice. Could he have known that he was dead in the official report of the admiral of the *St. George*—dead with all his comrades, dead and buried with his pirate ship beneath the deep and stormy waves that roll around Bahamas coral reefs—he might have selected to be put on board an English ship ; but he was wary, and his mind turned to Venice and Father Lavello. He had for the time being taken upon himself a new name by way of wise precaution, resolving to feel his way to the abiding place of Father Lavello, and know something of his record, and the character he bore with his people before entrusting to him the secret of his existence and his desires. His long imprisonment had made him secretive and mistrustful ; dulled his perceptive qualities ; given his eye a trick of wandering, and to his speech a certain hesitancy that to the common mind marked him down as imbecile. And so once more he was dubbed the " mad Englishmen," and later he was assigned not only a name but a local habitation ; he was called " The Mad Englishman of Venice."

But Alan was far from mad. Dreamy ? Yes, far more so than the dreamy-looking custodian of the time-worn palace ; dreamy, with lucid intervals of energy and passion ; dreamy, with poetic memories of a saintly wife and child ; dreamy, with sounds of the sea in his ears and mirthful voices ; dreamy, with the light of the crackling fire of a winter's hearth in his memory, and pictures of domestic peace, of neighbors sitting in the wintry glow of peat and wood. He was a dreamer gazing back on sunny seas and happy fisherfolk ; a dreamer who falls from paradise to hell, from happiness and peace and domestic love and home to tyranny and wrong ; to battle, murder, and tem-

pestuous fights at sea; from lying by the side of a wife beloved beyond all women to lying prone by her grave, victims both of them of a lawless law and a lawless magistracy. Yes, he was a dreamer indeed, this wanderer who paused as if from sheer sympathy by the rough steps of the decaying palace with its long-robed and be-fezzed custodian.

Surely the ruined house was the place where such a bony, withered, hawk-eyed mariner as Alan Keith should rest; this silent Turk was the sentinel of the silent palaces and mysterious boats who should make him welcome. And so he addressed himself to the Turk, and the Turk came out of his reverie to look with pitying eyes upon the stranger. Such a presentation of picturesque age were these three, that one's mind rests upon it with awe and wonder. The two strange men; the one dead palace.

It was an instinctive act of hospitality that led the Turk to take the wanderer in. An humble boatman had rowed him from the quay in his *sandola*, and here had left him with the Turk, who, opposite in creed, in thought, in every way, still found reason for comradeship with his grim petitioner. They were both alone, one with his memories, the other a stranger in a strange land. The custodian, however, had acquaintances. He had lived long enough in Venice to adopt some of her habits and to be on speaking terms with certain frequenters of a *café* in a shady corner of the steps that led upward over the Rialto bridge. Here he would once or twice a week take his cup of coffee, and smoke his chibouk and listen to the conversation of other guests while they sipped their diluted anisette, or drank their black coffee, denouncing with bated breath or blatent defiance, as the case might be, their Austrian masters. The blond mistress of the landlord, with her lightly shod feet, showing shapely ankles in white stockings, would pay special attention to the silent Turk, and the Venetians would often talk at him of the

time when Venice was great and free, and the Fonda dei Grechi was one of the glories of the Grand Canal. Otherwise the custodian had neither kith nor kin nor friends in Venice. He had permitted, however, the friendly encroachment of a certain humble gondolier and his wife to find a lodging in a wing of the palace overlooking a back canal, in return for which they gave him such domestic services as he required, did his marketing, cooked his food, and in winter made desperate, if unavailing, efforts to keep his salon warm. Atilio was the gondolier and Teresa was his wife, and they could both speak a little English, which they had picked up in the service of a great merchant, who had traded round the world, and had once taken them to the great port of London. But Atilio had never heard such strange English as the grim stranger spoke, and Teresa had never seen so evidently mad a lodger as he whom his excellency, the signori, had thought well to shelter and protect.

In such a multifarious community as that of Venice in those days, with its strange sails from Eastern ports and West, with its curious fisherfolk from the islands of the lagoons; its mysterious Jews of the ghetto in their picturesque gaberdines; its Austrian officials and sentinels, and its grave old citizens, it might have been thought that Alan Keith would have escaped notice; but he seemed to impress mysteriously the most ordinary person; his gaunt figure towering above the crowd, the long, patched, and foreign coat he wore reaching from his neck to his buckled shoes, and decorated in some queer barbaric fashion; his long legs in faded velvet trunks and silken hose; his bony hands and pallid face, his sunken eyes that shone like meteors from beneath his shaggy eyebrows: his long, thin gray hair, and his restless manner; they knew not what to make of him, the simple gondolier and his wife, and the keeper of the *café*, whither the silent Turk had taken him, was as much at a loss; and in a very short time he came to

be spoken of as "the mad Englishman." Once unwittingly he had offended a number of men and boys on the quay by some remark which he thought was a complimentary expression in choice Italian, and which was nothing like it. They made for him to testify their anger in blows, but the gaunt stranger scattered them like leaves before a mighty wind. Mischief would have been done had not an English captain, whose ship was lying in port awaiting her sailing papers, interposed and explained what Alan Keith had intended to say, whereupon the crowd burst forth into laughter, and insisted on shaking hands with the poor mad fellow; for now they knew he must be mad to call them villains and beasts of burden when he meant to do them honor.

And so Alan wandered about the city, which was to him a dream within a dream, and he a ghost from some other world. He was happy, quite happy, for a long, long time, free to come and go, with shelter for his head and food for his stomach. No jailer held him by the heels. Once in a way, the Austrian challenge of "*Halt! Wer da?*" broke in upon his dreams, but the sentinel would smile good naturedly as the mad Englishman retired with a bow of submission and a "Pardon, messieur," spoken with a broad Scotch accent. Alan, indeed, began to think he had been translated to Paradise, and for a time what he considered to be the ambition of his latter days, faded out in the free air of Italy; for it was free to him, the very essence of the supremest liberty, whatever it might be to the Italians, whose aspirations he did not understand. He found that the few gold and silver pieces which his Spanish deliverer had deposited with the suit of clothes with which he had been endowed, and the bundle of curious linen that had been placed for him on board the ship, went a long way in the estimation of the unspeakable Turk, and that an odd coin now and then made Atilio and Teresa both willing

servants, however mad he might seem to them—a madness that was not vicious, be it said, but a madness that was unmistakable—especially when, as had happened more than once, Alan had tossed one of his strange coins upon the *café* counter to treat some *lasgnone* to a cup of wine, or had himself indulged in an extra glass of brandy with his coffee; for then his eyes would fairly blaze, and he would talk of fights on sea and land, of stormy waters and the haunted lands of distant shores; but even then, he spoke with a kind of reserve that emphasized his madness.

There was neither latitude nor longitude in his inconsequential yarns; but once in a *café* down by the quay, he had been led into making overtures to an English captain concerning a buried treasure. He had discovered a sudden energy during a talk between the captain and his mate. They had heard of a sunken Spanish galleon that of late had shifted, and now showed her masts, and into whose hold a Frenchman had dived and found it full of gold. Thereupon Alan's dream of peace and happy days of freedom in an earthly paradise had gone back to reality, and he felt how poor he was, yet how rich, that he might still have a son alive to whom he owed a fatherly duty, and to whom for the sweet sake of an angel mother in Heaven, he felt a yearning affection.

"I ken of a treasure," he said, looking up from the seat where he had been huddled smoking a wooden pipe with a long reed stem, "and eh, man, if I'd a ship, and ane or twa good han's, I'd mak the fortune of him who'd provide them; a nod's just as gude as a wenk to a blind horse."

The sailors looked with undisguised surprise at the foreign looking withered old man who without invitation joined in their conversation, and made a wild declaration of secret wealth, not in French or German, not in Italian, or Moorish, or Hebrew, but in English, with a Scotch accent, and at Venice.

"Where d'ye hail from, master?" asked the captain.

"Ah, ah," laughed Alan, "that's a vera easy question."

"I should say so," remarked the mate, pouring out a fresh glass of Chianti for his chief.

"Ef I could jest mak a contract wi' ye givin' me command o' yer shep," said Alan, "within sixty days ye'd hae no further cause to sail the seas."

"Very likely not," said the captain good-naturedly, "and no ship to sail in maybe; join us, friend, in a glass of wine for the sake of bonnie Scotland; that's where ye hail from, I'm thinking."

"May be," said Alan, "we knaw where we hail frae, but where are we gaein'? That's the puzzle, eh?"

Alan felt that he was being questioned; and he was still wary about committing himself; for he had yet to learn on what legal grounds he stood. He had reason to expect Father Lavello in Venice. Idly as he had spent his time, dreaming in the sun, reveling in his freedom, he had nevertheless busied himself in inquiries about Father Lavello; and the gondolier had at last made out what he wanted. In the first place Alan's method of pronouncing the Italian name had been a barrier to inquiry, and in the next place, Father Lavello had left Venice for Verona; and Atillio had succeeded in having conveyed thither a letter from Alan, to which an answer had been received by word of mouth, implying that Alan would very soon see the priest whom he sought. This progress had only been achieved within a few days of the incident on the quay; and Alan felt that he might be very near the discovery of things of the last importance to him, and he became all the more circumspect. At the same time, he had of late brooded over a possible means of visiting Newfoundland, more particularly the scene of his buried fortunes, and the deep interest which the two English officers were expressing in the sunken treasures of a Spanish ship, unloosed his tongue; but to no further

purpose then to convince the strangers that he was a softy, a dreamer of dreams, a harmless lunatic.

Nevertheless Alan surprised them with his knowledge of navigation ; and in a little while they were both talking to him with a rational consideration of certain propositions that he discovered to them. He sat at their table with a certain distinction of manner that gradually made them even deferential. He allowed them to understand that he knew they thought him half-witted ; but he made them feel that there was method in his madness. He spoke of long years of imprisonment, of shipwreck and slavery, of a thousand reasons why he might well be mad ; and he also spoke of human beings who had prayed to die and could not, men who came out of every danger unscathed, who bore torture, misery, the suffocating embrace of the sea, the anger of breakers on rocky coasts, and who lived on and on ! He held them with his natural eloquence ; and he drank their wine with every now and then a repetition of their own pledge of "Bonnie Scotland."

Time went on. The moon came out upon the lagoons, and Alan started homeward full of strange fancies, burning to take those sailormen into his confidence, half forgetting David, his son, only remembering the treasure ; and as he went swinging along, strengthened physically and mentally by the generous Italian wine, he lapsed back into reverie and wonder, into the oft-recurring sensation of being in another world, in some halfway house to Heaven, some earthly Paradise anchored in a summer sea.

He sat down by the steps of St. Mark's, and watched the evening traffic on the Grand Canal ; stretched himself down almost by the water, where other men were reclining. None moved to give him place either in fear or friendship. They knew he was mad, but he had harmed no one, and Atilio spoke well of him. They knew the mad Englishman had paid their city the compliment of calling it Paradise.

He lay unmolested, with his hands underneath his chin, watching the gondolas with glow-worm lights in their bows. One or two coasters were making for their anchorage by the custom-house ; he traced the lines of the great church of San Giorgio Maggiore against the moonlit sky ; and he was very happy in a negative kind of way, warm, contented, the wine coursing pleasantly through his veins. He might have lain there all the livelong night until the sun took up the story of the moon and adorned Venice with all the beauties of the morning had not Atilio laid his heavy hand upon him and demanded his attention.

" *Dorme ?* " said Atilio.

Alan dreamed on.

" Awake, signori ! " said Atilio, " *venite con me !* "

" Wherefore ? " asked the mad Englishman, taking up a sitting position, and looking at Atilio reproachfully, as being awakened from a pleasant sleep.

Atilio was excited. His little English failed him when he was deeply moved. He could only repeat his one word, " awake," and point with a stumpy finger in the direction of the ruined palace where they both had the privelege to lodge.

" Home ? " asked Alan.

" *Si, si, certamente,*" said the gondolier, " *andiamo a casa,* come, awake, signori."

Alan gathered himself up and stood by Atilio, so gaunt and yet so picturesque that one or two of the loungers looked at him with an admiration inspired by their inborn feeling for artistic effect. One of them smilingly asked why the madman did not continue to rise until he topped the campanile and could shake paws with the lion of St. Mark.

Atilio laughed and lifted up his arms, and pointing to the moon asked why not further ; yonder, where the silent man would know him ; the man in the moon, with

whom the signori held long conversations on nights like these.

"Poor devil," said a brother gondolier, "and yet he is happy."

"Most happy, dreams he owns caskets of treasure, has ships at sea laden with gold and precious stones; wait, he says, 'and I will bring my donations of diamonds, rubies, and gold, for the domes of St. Marco.'" said Atilio, chattering away in Italian, complimented by the attention of his audience.

"Well, that is good, he has a greatful heart," the other replied, "and he adores our beautiful Venice; it is sufficient."

Alan, though now upon his feet, still gazed out across the canal, and now and then looked up at the moon, sailing along another vast waterway, as it seemed to him, in the heavens; but presently, as if he came out of his dream again, he asked, "Wherefore, Atilio, wherefore?"

Atilio replied again, volubly, but with such a strange mixture of English and Italian, that Alan could only ask again why he sought him, and catching something of Atilio's enthusiasm, put his question into his own vernacular, and elaborated it without the slightest thought of Atilio: "What in the deevil's name d'ye want desturbin' a man when he's just taking his ease, and requires neither yer service nor yet yer companie?"

And as if he understood every word, the gondolier replied, measuring his words carefully out: "*Il prete, ze curato*, Lavello."

"Lavello!" said Alan, almost in a whisper, "Lavello?"

"Lavello," repeated Atilio, "come, signori."

Atilio led the way across the piazza. Alan followed. They knew the footpaths of Venice as well as they knew her waterways.

"The companile and the pin," said one of the loungers,

who had thitherto been a silent looker-on, as he turned to watch Atilio and the madmam disappear in the shadows of St. Mark's, the companile striding out with long legs, the pin almost running to keep up with it.

A burst of laughter greeted the humorous comparison, to be succeeded by the silence of men who sleep and the ripple of waters, that emphasize silence.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A DREAMER OF DREAMS.

To listen to Father Lavello, the robust curé of Verona, formerly the young enterprising priest of Heart's Delight, was for many days the height of happiness to the wiry, Quixote-looking Alan Keith.

He lived again. The past came back to him without its passion or its pain. It was like a story told. He saw himself outside himself. He was a looker-on, deeply interested, but only a looker-on. He loved that other Alan Keith for loving Hannah, to whom his soul went back in worship and incense.

Black clouds swept over his soul at thought of Bentz and Ristack, but they passed as quickly as they came, the sunshine predominated.

Father Lavello was eloquent in dwelling upon the mercy of God, and the sympathy of the Holy Mother of God, for Alan and the dear one who had gone before. He kept Alan's thought's among the gentle places of the past, and the boundless love of Alan for his wife filled so much of his vision in looking back that it sweetened the bitterness of his soul. His recollection of the early days of Heart's Delight was now above all memories the most vivid and real.

Alan told the priest of the visits of Hannah to his dungeon, and the curé turned the tender fancies to good religious account. The mad Englishman soon became known as a devout Catholic. The faithful deemed this to be ample evidence of his perfect sanity. Even in those days Venice had her scoffers, and the lean and withered

Englishman mortifying himself was, to them, somewhat humorous in a grim kind of way ; for most of the Church's devotees were smug and fat, and of contented dispositions ; whereas the mad Englishmen was met at all hours in the city wandering from church to church, from narrow footway to narrow square ; while fishermen encountered him at equally varied hours, plying the sandolo which some good-natured citizen had lent him, now with oar or paddle, now skimming along under sail, a veritable Ancient Mariner, with sparkling eyes and thin gray locks that fluttered in the wind.

Father Lavello had been enabled to almost complete Alan's story of the secret harbor of Labrador, the wreck of the *St. Dennis*, the arrest of Plympton, his acquittal and death, and the destiny of his son David and the woman Sally Mumford, in whose charge the boy had been left. The curé's advice kept Alan still in Venice. He had agents who could follow up the clew to David's whereabouts, from where they had left it some dozen or fifteen years previously.

He had long ago been convinced of Alan's death ; other ties and responsibilities had diverted his attention from the story of David, his son. Heart's Delight and all that belonged to it had more or less faded away except as incidental to his career. A curé in Verona, such ambition as he had encouraged at Heart's Delight, with dreamy vistas of new conquests for the Church, had died out. The priest's mind had gradually taken up the color and temper of his environment. He lived a quiet reflective life, enjoyed his garden, drank his white wine and red, confessed his flock, married them and buried them, visited his clerical neighbors, went on voluntary pilgrimages to monastic establishments where he was heartily welcome with his genial face and his happy views of life ; and altogether had become a calm, contented, well-to-do curé, with his little house, his careful old housekeeper, who was

an excellent cook, his library, and his uniformly good health.

For a time he had been, however, greatly moved at the meeting with Alan Keith. Like his old parishioner of Heart's Delight, during their conversations he felt some of the old passion of the colonial days, the inspiration of adventure born of the Atlantic Sea. Once more he felt his pulse hurry on with reminiscences of the stirring episode of the Fisheries in summer, and winter stories by the Great House fire, when the winds were raging without, making snow drifts mountains high in the valleys, and wrapping the shore as far as eye could see in a vast winding sheet.

Furthermore his sense of the romantic had been piqued by Alan's honest story of the adventurers of Wilderness Creek, though he had crossed himself many times during Alan's narratives of the capture of the *Anne of Dartmouth*, and the vengeance that had been wreaked upon the three fishing admirals.

Alan had to undergo certain incidents of prayer and penance before the curé could feel justified in assuring him of that forgiveness with which he was empowered to console him in the name of St. Peter; all the same, the good priest found himself sympathizing with his penitent, whose confessional exercises were rather secular than religious, triumphant rather than humble and contrite. Alan was, however, as wax in the hands of the curé, so far as outward form and ceremony were concerned; and once more he thought Hannah came to him, and he dreamed the old dreams over again, the dreams that had made life and his long imprisonment a possibility of life and sanity; for as we know, however Venice might agree with the Moorish jailer in calling him mad Alan, had given him ample evidence of a strong power of mind that had enabled him to withstand the breaking down and ruin of his mental faculties. It is not madness to dream; it is madness not to dream.

"It wouldna 'a' been a matter for wonder if I'd gane clean daft, a Jack o' Bedlam," said Alan in one of his talks with the curé; "think o' it! Twenty years o' bondage! First a slave, a Christian slave amang blacks. Lastly, a prisoner, barely seein' the leight for nigh upon ten year or mair! I didna count the time then, but I've been reckoning the years ever since I gat free!"

"It is terrible," said the curé, "as you say, it is wonderful that you have retained your reason, my poor dear friend; but Christ and his Holy Mother have had you in their keeping. And how came you in the hands of the slave-dealers?"

"Saving me from the sea and the jagged rocks, divine Providence thocht reight to drop me into the hands of what they call Riff pirates, trading in human flesh; they made nae difference between Christians and heathens, Europeans and Africans, and I went wi' the rest; ye'd a thocht if ye could just a-seen me, wi' nae mair flesh on my bones than was enough to haud them thigether, that the inhuman beasts woud a-let me free; but nae, as I tell ye, I went wi' the rest?"

"My poor friend!" said the curé.

"It is said there's nae depth without a lower, and its true ivvery word o' it. Eh, how I sighed for the days o' the slavery! When they shut me up between stane walls, I had nae idea how happy I'd been slavin' i' the sun, tillin' the groond, carrying heavy loads, pulling an oar chained to the seat, getting now and then a bitter taste o' blows, sleeping at neight wi' a shedfu' o' African niggers, and a'maist as many Europeans, who, like mysel', had once been white! God, man, when I think o' it, I thirst for blood like a tiger turn'd to bay!"

Alan tore open his Oriental vest and robe and paced the floor, animal-like, as if he were caged, the good priest slowly following him, uttering kindly and soothing words.

"Forgive me!" said Alan presently, "forgive me!

There are times when the devil seems to tak haud o' me, and upbraid me that I didna find opportunity to cut the throats o' them? And, man, I did seek it, but they had the scent o' bludhounds for danger and a' their watchfulness!"

"There, there, my son, my dear old friend, be calm, sit down," urged the priest, the thought passing through his mind that had he himself been more intent upon the technical observances of Holy Church, he might have elected to pass his days in some lonely conventual cell.

"I ask your pardon," said Alan, "I amna quite mysel' at times, and nae wonder, as ye are gude enough to say, thinking o' the gude time I hae wasted!"

"Why did they detain you in prison?" asked the priest, deeply interested in Alan's story, whenever his strange friend was willing to relate his adventures.

"Nae, I dinna ken! I just expected they'd tak my heed off. Sometimes I wish they had, saving your riverance's presence, as puir Pat Doolan used to say, when he ootraged the deescipline o' the Church. Eh, hoo often I hae thocht o' those days o' Heart's Delight, sometimes comin' tae regard them a' as just a dream, a kind o' life a man might hae leeved before he was born! D'ye nae ken yersel' the day when ye've felt ye hae liv'd in anither warld, and that ye hae been left somehow behind in this?"

"It is the next world I'm most concerned about," said the priest, again patting the old man's bony hand, and looking into the wandering eyes of his friend with compassion, and the wish to soothe and comfort him.

"Aye, ivvery man to his trade," said Alan; "but ye were asking why they didna hang me?"

"No, why they kept you in prison?"

"That's ane o' the puzzles I often axed mysel'! I earned naething for them in prison, I was just a wee bit usefu' ootside. But ane o' my jailers dropt a hint ane day that,

by the intervention o' the Christian powers, Christian slavery had been abolished, and that even piracy had become a deeficult business. Ye see there had been some kind o' rebellion i' the land ; a risin' o' the tribes, and I had ta'en a hand in it, bein' suddenly freed for that purpose ; but it was just a fizzle, and I had nae time eether to get into the feight or run for liberty, before I was a prisoner in the hands o' the sultan or the king, or whativver they ca'd the turbanned deevil, and when I wouldna boo wi' the rest, insteed o' haeing my head chopp'd off, I was taen aside, and my nationality bein' discovered by ane, they ca'd an interpreter ; I was released as a slave, and imprisoned as a traiter, or a foreign spy, or what ye will, God in heaven only knaws, I dinna, but they kept me in the prison o' Tafilet. I gathered frae my jailer that I was regarded as an uncannie kind o' agent in the rising, a danger to what they ca'd the State, and being English, a kind o' fiend either to kill or chain up, and sae, in mercifu' consideration o' their victory, they decided to chain me up, and shut me oot frae the light o' heaven ! I wouldna a-been surprised gin they had seen me rise up from the coral strand that I was the very fiend himself come to plague them. Eh, but it was just a wonderfu' thing how I made my way out o' that fearsome watter, wi' the rocks that jagged, you might a thought even the Evil One couldna hae survived them ! "

" Almighty God was good to you, my son," said the curé.

" I hae tried to think sae, my dear friend," Alan replied, " but what about the ithers that perished ? "

" The blessed saints must have interceded for you," said the curé, " and Our Almighty Father had work for you, who knows, perhaps for the glorification of his Church, for you were, as I remember, my son, a brand snatched from the burning, by the good influences of that saintly woman who was given to you as a helpmate and companion.

" It passes belief that God could hae any work for sae

puir a creature, for ane sae punished and persecuted," Alan answered, "and yet it was miraculous that I was resurrected, as you might say, frae that livin' grave to be plunged intae anither, and still be saved to see ye once again in the flesh. While ivvery timber o' the ship went to pieces and ivvery man o' the puir bodies wha had sailed wi' me and fought wi' me went to the bottom; I was lifted out o' the breakers, and I rose reight up, a' torn and ragged it is true, wi' bleedin' hands and feet, but I stood reight up a' the same like a livin' pillar on a mighty plain o' ribbed sand; and I started off to walk agin the red bars o' the sun. On and on, the sand hot to my bleedin' feet, a' the land red wi' the last light o' the day. And when I reached the long, low-lying city that I thought on as the New Jerusalem, a refuge and a blessing, I had only risen from the dead to fall into slavery, heathen slavery. I came nigh upon cursing God and myself—asking your reverence's pardon. Nae, dinna turn frae me, I'm nae sae wicked as ye think!"

"You have been most unfortunate," said the priest.

"From slavery to a freedom hardly worse, frae freedom to enforced service i' the field, feightin' for what I didna ken; I only desired to be free. The fiends mun a smothered the voice o' my saintly intercessor at the mercy seat. It seemed I couldna dee, for when I was healed o' my wounds and come to ken mysel' again I was a prisoner; what should hae been a hospital was a dungeon, what should hae been air and sun was just a stifling pest and darkness. Is it nae strange I hae the patience to tell ye o' my woes?"

"The wonder is, my poor, unhappy son, that you do not proclaim them from the housetops," the curé replied, affectionately pressing Alan's bony hand.

"You were always kind and considerate, my father," said Alan, his voice softening, his eyes moist with emotion, "and I am grateful, dinna ye think I amna; there are times

in this heavenly city when I forget everything, savin' the sunshine, the blue skies, and the wondrous palaces, and when I feel as if I had begun to walk the sacred streets o' Paradise. D'ye mind the saintly tender wife I had out yonder in Heart's Delight? Ah, it was only she that kept me frae madness. She came to me and sat by me, and talked to me in her soft sweet voice, and bad me be patient; and many's the time the jailer looked as if he just envied me my chains when he heard my cheerfu' voice in response to hers; and he'd fairly greet when I towd him who I had had visitin' me, and thanked him for lettin' her through the gates; eh, but it was a sad day for me when the owd man deed, and anither come i' his place wha kenned nae Joseph, as the Scripture hath it!"

"It was the Blessed Mary that led her thither, my son; you had prayed to the Holy Virgin?"

"I had prayed to God and the Blessed Virgin, to Blessed Michael the Archangel, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints I'd ever heard you name in those happy days in the little chapel in the bay and the Great House inshore; and I asked for Hannah, her name was on my lips in season and oot, and one day or neight she came—I couldna much distinguish neight frae day—she came with a great leight about her. I could see ivvery stone i' the slimy wall o' my cell, ivvery bit o' mortar and deevilish thing that crawled there; and then it a' changed to the valley o' Heart's Content, and we sat outside the tent they made her there, and I could see her gracious countenance and hear her heavenly voice, and feel her soft hand in mine; and that was happiness enough to wipe out years o' misery; and she came again and again day after day, and the prison walls fell down and we sat beneath the trees of Heart's Content; but sin' I left that boose o' detention and sailed the sea and anchored in this haven, that is a sea and a city a' in one, I nae had sight o' her but once!"

"You have seen her again?" said the priest.

"Aye, last neight of a' ithers; but it was different frae the prison and it was only in a dream; she came to me the neight and she led a young man by the hand; he was dripping wet wi' the sea; 'twas a sailor lad, and she said unto me soft and low but in clear accents, impressive and deliberate, 'This is our dear son David, be good to him, he will need your help and love.' At first I thought he mun be dead, but she smiled as if she knew my thought and said, 'No he lives'; and then I woke and went forth; it was break o' day and Atilio was up and in his boat, and he put her head about and we sailed into the lagoons and the world was just beautifu' beyond imagination, and I said to mysel', I'll see him hereabouts, my dear son David, and the wind coming in from the blue sea I just thought answered me and said, yes; and I felt that I should ken him the moment I set eyes upon him, for the lad she held so tender-like by the hand had her winsome look in's eyes, and I could remember my ain sel' when like him, I was that tall and straight, like a young poplar swaying in the wind; though now I look like that same tree blasted by the lightning, with bare branches, a jest and a scoffing to those wha hae escaped the storms."

"Not so, dear friend, gray hairs are honorable, and the lightning has not withered your heart, nor blighted your life. You have sinned greatly."

"Aye, I know it!" said Alan.

"We have all sinned greatly," continued the priest, "but few have been punished upon earth as our Heavenly Father hath punished you; and as I have already vouched for it on your contrition, your resolution to sin no more, and your humble confession, your sins are forgiven you. To-morrow in chapel, fitting time and place, we will speak further of this. Meanwhile, Atilio you see has laid the cloth, and it it fitting we refresh the physical man."

"Aye, but ye tak' me straight back to Heart's Delight!" said Alan, pushing his straggling hair from his forehead. "Ye always know how to win a man from unhappy thoughts, how to soothe his temper. Spiritual and pheesical I always said Father Lavello had nae equal on airth! Teresse, bring the chekkens. Atilio, pour out the wine."

The curé smiled and drew his chair to the table and talked of the Austrians and the fortunes of war, told stories of Venice when she was mistress of the seas, talked of Verona, and coaxed his host back from the hard lines of his miseries into the genial atmosphere of the Lion of St. Mark.

Father Lavello set his agents in England to work finding out David Keith; and they traced him to old Petherick's at Yarmouth. It took months, however, to conduct the correspondence. While they were waiting for information, Alan and Father Lavello made their dispositions for the future of Alan's son and heir. The curé, with a righteous regard for higher powers than their own, took frequent occasion to warn Alan by reference to the past, that what might seem to man the most wise and virtuous plans did not always find favor with God. They had both good hopes, nevertheless, that Alan might live to embrace his son and endow him with such of his worldly goods as he deemed honestly come by, with a reversion of other treasures to the service of Holy Mother Church.

Meanwhile, with the aid of a wise councilor and banker in Venice, Alan had been enabled to withdraw from the Bank of England a considerable sum of money that had lain there on deposit since the days when David Plympton had induced his son-in-law to place there a part of Hannah's dowry and certain savings of his own.

It was fortunate for Alan that no legal or other record of his piracy had come between him and his written and duly witnessed order for this money—the admiral who

fought the *St. George* having, as we have seen, wiped out with his official narrative every soul connected with it—the only living creature who could have given evidence to the contrary being Lester Bentz, who, having been knighted "for distinguished services to his country," was at that time doing official duty as governor of a group of islands far away from Newfoundland. Sir Lester Bentz was indeed a man of influence and consideration. He had taken out with him to his island home a young wife, and it is quite possible that he has founded a family of colonial governors who will carry the name of Bentz with honor and distinction to official graves. Father Lavello declined to discuss with Alan the mysterious, not to say peculiar, ways of Providence as exemplified in the case of Sir Lester Bentz, except to point out to him the usefulness of Sir Lester's absence from England, and the utter improbability of his ever being in a position to do further injury to him or his son.

So the time went on, and Alan found himself not only no longer penniless but a man of current means, with gold in his pocket and gold in the Venetian bank.

From being laughed at in Venice and treated with pitying smiles, he became the wonder and admiration of the city, beloved of the poor, respected of the rich, an eccentric it is true, still a little mad, but with method in his madness, and in his bright, flashing eyes the light of benevolence.

The solitary Turk salaamed him, for he had brought light and warmth and furniture and tapestries back to the old palace. The gondolier and his wife obeyed his every whim, for he had made their gloomy cover in the back ways of the palace homelike and comfortable; so that when the winter came they were not perished, and they had wine every day and blessed the Virgin and her messenger, the mad Englishman, for it.

Thus in these days of his premature age and solitude,

Alan Keith found something of consolation and recompense for much of his suffering, and with promise of a living son to take his hand and pass down the last hills of life with him ; a son to whom he could talk of his mother ; a son to whom he could tell the secret of Demon's Rock ; a son whom he could endow with wealth and power ; a son who might restore the names of Keith and Plympton to honor and respect at home and in Newfoundland.

CHAPTER XXX.

BAD OMENS FOR THE "MORNING STAR."

No sooner was the *Morning Star* well on her way than she became the sport and scoff of the elements. Ships are lucky or unlucky, as men are. The *Morning Star* was unlucky.

If there had been a league of fate against her she could not have been worse beset than she was on this voyage, which was to be memorable in the career of David Keith.

He set out with a cheerful heart. His hopes rose high with his love. Elmira had given him a token of her pledged affection. It was a ring, in exchange for one he had pressed upon her finger at parting. Sally Mumford, his foster mother, had said "Good-by" bravely, without a tear that he could see. Mildred Hope had permitted him to kiss her forehead and press her generous hand. Zaccheus Webb had broached a special keg of brandy that had been smuggled from the Mounseers, and had drunk himself into ballads and sea songs; and Harry Barkstead had gone as far as Bristol with his friend and made the coach-ride merry with his free and hearty manners; furthermore, he had given quite an air of distinction to David's sailing by his patronage of the captain and owners of the *Morning Star* bound for Halifax and St. John's.

Nothing could have been more promising than David's trip until the *Morning Star* begun to buffet the great rollers of the North Atlantic. Her troubles did not come upon her suddenly or altogether unexpected, for the glass had begun to fall steadily from the time she was clear of the land.

But one peril followed another with the direst persistence. She encountered a steady crescendo of disaster.

There was not a cloud when she encountered her first fierce gale. The skies were a steely blue. Walking over the dunes at Caister, or tramping along the Yarmouth streets, you would have said it was a fine breezy day. Fishing smacks might have delayed putting out to sea until the glass changed; otherwise it would not have been thought, especially by landsmen, anything but good weather; yet on board the *Morning Star* it was awful.

The winds raged from every quarter of the compass. The sea rose in vast waves that beat upon the ship with thunderous blows.

David Keith had seen storms in the North Sea. He had ridden through heavy gales with Zaccheus Webb in the *Flying Scud*, that did not fly, but labored and kept her keel strong and steady, a veritable Dutchman for stern and beam; but he had seen nothing like the North Atlantic; had heard nothing like the roar of the winds that drove against the *Morning Star*, and at times threatened literally to blow her out of the water. Now she was on her side; now she would right herself to rise upon the topmost wave as if to slip into the gulf beyond, all the time straining and crying like a living thing. The sailors strove to ease her, tying up everything that could give an extra grip for the strong unseen arms of the wind that tore at her and ripped her sails whenever there was a stretch of canvas to lay hold upon.

"Tell 'e she be unlücky," David heard one of the Bristol men say to another during a passing lull in the tempest. "I grant, as you says, that she did not sail zactly on a Friday, but it were the thirteenth of the month, and Matt White of Welsh Back met a cat as he wor going on board to the slip where the *Star* was moored."

"I dunno as cats is onlucky," said the other, "I don't

hold with all they says about cats, nor yet about pigs being unlucky."

"Don't 'e! Well, then I tell 'e' they be as onlucky as priests or women on a ship!"

"Well, Billy," was the reply, "I'd risk the luck if I had my gal abroad."

"Would 'e now? Then I wouldn't, so I tell 'e! I believes strong in omens, and you mark my words; and talking of pigs, there was a drove of beasts unloading in the Welsh Back the very day we was towed down the river. And you knows well enough that Matt White dreamed as the *Morning Star* would go down, and didn't waunt to sail in her, but they med him; and once afore on a similar dream the *Warlock* did go down, as sure as we are in for the dirtiest weather as ever was!"

David being the only passenger on board had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the officers and crew. During the first few days he enjoyed the trip immensely. The captain was a sturdy if somewhat silent man, but he listened respectfully to David's fishing adventures.

The first mate liked to talk and he found David a good listener. The northern coast of Newfoundland was well known to him, and he gave it a bad character. It was not only a danger to ships but it harbored desperadoes. The coast was sparsely populated and all manner of ruffians occupied it, building themselves shanties in the rocky caves and to his certain knowledge practicing the villainous work of wrecking and robbery. From this they drifted into the traditions of the coast, and then into stories of the superstitions of sailors. David told him what he had overheard, and the mate confessed that there was a feeling of uneasiness in the ship. He had advised the captain to let Matt White quit, but the captain was a rigid disciplinarian and he would not hear of a man who had signed articles being released on frivolous grounds; for Matt had confessed that the only

reason for his desire to get another ship was on account of a dream.

During the heaviest stress of the first gale that was noted in her log two of the crew of the *Morning Star* came nigh upon throwing Matt White, of the Welsh Back, overboard, as a Jonah, but they relented when the storm abated, and Matt had shown himself as willing as he was capable, taking every bit of dangerous duty assigned to him with a cheerful "Aye, aye," and holding out upon the yards with superb grip when the sail at every bulge seemed as if it must fling him into the sea. If Matt feared he did not show it, except when omens were talked about. No sailor aboard had a sterner nerve, none worked as Matt did, without a murmur, even when piped from the short and intermittent rests that hollowed the cheeks of other men and took the strength out of their arms.

David had slept but little for several nights when at last the weather improved, and once more the men were busy unfurling sails and hoping to take full advantage of the wind that seemed to be changing in favor of the voyage.

"Yes, I think you can count on a little rest to-night," said the captain, as he scanned the horizon.

"You think the worst is over?" said David.

"I hope so," said the captain.

"You doubt it?"

"I do; my advice is to get some sleep while you can, Mr. Keith."

"Thank you," said David.

The captain went below. The mate took his place on deck. But the mate was no longer talkative, and David, as he watched the sunset, found his thoughts going back to England, to Elmira and his foster mother, to Zaccheus Webb and the old house on the dunes. The wind was still high, but David was no mere landsman, and he heeded not the pitching and swirl of the ship as she beat up into the

wind, and seemed to stretch forth wide open wings, as if she would fly from the storm that was coming up with fresh forces.

David paced the deck and lifted his face up to the spray that scattered itself among the lower rigging and beat upon him like rain and hail.

The crew were all busy about him, modifying the swing of a sail here and there, and following the signals of the boatswain's cheerful whistle. David looked beyond the ship and pictured Yarmouth and Caister and all that he loved there. Mildred Hope came into his mind, and at thought of her he offered up a silent prayer that he might be spared to return to the little house in Hartley's Row.

The stars came out, clear and bright. David thought of the one that might be shining over the home of Elmira.

It might have been that his father was looking up at the heavens, too—making allowance for the difference of time—and wondering and thinking of the son who knew him not, and who deemed him dead long, long ago. The curé had been able to report to Alan Keith the departure of David for Newfoundland. The information had come from Petherick, with whom Father Lavello had resumed a correspondence that had already proved so consoling to Alan. It may therefore well be that "the mad Englishman of Venice" would think of David at sunset and when the stars came out, for it is then, somehow, that men are most accustomed to ponder over those they love, especially when they are travelers far away. It was well, perhaps, that Alan could not, even in his dreams, see David, his son, on board the *Morning Star*.

With the setting of the sun the wind rose still higher. There was, however, no suggestion of any fresh danger. The vessel had already behaved so well, that she might be fairly expected to ride out any other storm that struck her

path. With a cheery "Good-night, Mr. Thompson," David left the mate to his labors and went to bed.

Two hours later he was awakened by the well-known commotion that belongs to a storm at sea. It did not need an experienced ear to make out that the ship was in the throes of a desperate struggle. The wash of the sea could be heard like a cataract sweeping the deck. It was accompanied by the hard, steady beat of the prow against the waves. She seemed to be pounding the sea as if a mighty hammer was at work. "All hands, ahoy!" rose trumpet-like in the blast, followed by what sounded to be "Aye, ayes." Then there was a confusion of sounds, a ripping and a staggering, as if whatever sails had to be reefed had evidently gone in tatters before the wind. A sound as of musketry followed. This was the jib blown to ribbons. Shouts again—some half heard—commenced; this time through a speaking trumpet—"Lay up on that main yard," seemed to pierce the other noises. Another scramble of feet, and responsive cries of willingness and effort; the flapping of sails like the beat of mighty wings, a falling of blocks on the deck, thunder and straining of timbers.

David scrambled from his berth and crawled on deck, among the broken yards and entanglements of rigging. The royal mast was being cut adrift. The galley went by the board, both anchors had worked loose, one of them was bearing down among the wreckage of sails and timbers; a water barrel was rolling from side to side, the ship was groaning as if her timbers would part. All the time the stars were shining. Many of them blinked as if the wind crossed them. The chief lanterns of the night, however, burnt steadily in the blue as if coldly watching the ship (that had been named in honor of one of the brightest of them) beating her heart out against the attacking winds and seas.

From bad to worse; from a full-rigged ship to a broken-

masted, ragged, lame thing still fighting the storm; from a sail-stripped mutilated carrier of men and goods, to a water-logged hulk; her prow a fairy-like figure, however, with a golden star still shining on its smooth forehead, the only part of the doomed ship that could be plainly seen above the waves. The sculptor who designed and carved that woman with the proud defiant gaze, might have been honestly proud if he could have seen his ideal figure rise every now and then and breast the topmost wave, lifting her bright golden star into the very face of the night and awaiting eclipse with the dignity and calm of the sun itself.

When at last the storm abated; when the stars went in and the sun came out; when the sea was calm and smiling as it is on sunny days in the Solent, except for a wide and swelling motion that might be taken for pride of power; when the winds seemed to have paused to listen for the cries that had mingled with its own wild shouts of menace and destruction; all that was left of the *Morning Star* was one of two boats, with David Keith and the superstitious Bristol sailor aboard. The captain and mate went down with their ship. The rest of the crew were drowned by the foundering of the first boat they had launched.

David and Matt White of the Welsh Back were the only survivors of the *Morning Star*. The sun looked down upon them smilingly; and yet they were without meat or drink or compass—two famished men in an open boat on the North Atlantic.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"WAS LOST AND IS FOUND; WAS DEAD AND IS ALIVE AGAIN."

ONE of the sharpest agonies of shipwrecked men afloat is the passing of ships whose lookout they have been unable to attract. The morning has come with the cry, "A sail, a sail!" The day has been spent in making signals. The night has fallen with the sea once more a watery desert.

David Keith and his companion, Matt White of the Welsh Back, had no means of signaling.

They had neither mast nor oar. They were adrift upon the ocean without any power to direct or control their boat. Matt would stand up now and then and wave a handkerchief.

He did this, however, more by way of comforting his companion in misfortune than with any hope of winning the attention of anything or anybody within their horizon of vision. Furthermore, he gave David the benefit of his nautical observations as to their latitude and longitude, and by the help of his knife he contrived to turn one of the boat's seats into a rudder, with which he professed to steer, telling David that all they had to do was to keep in the track of ships.

Matt White had, however, not the slightest faith in the possibility of their being picked up. He, nevertheless, encouraged his young companion to hope, for he argued, as if the idea had only just occurred to any human being, that while there was life a man had no right to despair.

Matt knew he was doomed. He had said so before sailing. He had predicted the loss of the *Morning Star*. It

was a cruel law that compelled a man to go on board a doomed ship. What were omens for? he argued. They were to guide the mariner. Why did cats meet a man when he was going on board, and why did pigs also give warning? because they were so ordained; and as for a dream, why it was nothing short of impiety to disregard the forecast of a voyage when it was accompanied with other signs and tokens of disaster. But there, it was all over, the ship had gone, the captain who wouldn't be advised, and the mate and all the crew, except him and the one passenger; and all they had to do was to wait God's own time and hope for the best.

Not exactly in these words, but to this effect, Matt White communed with himself while David slept; and curiously enough the lad slept for many hours after the boat began to drift away from the scene of the wreck. On the other hand, Matt White could not sleep a wink. He watched and talked, grew hungry and a-thirst, fancied he saw sails when the sea was empty of them as his own hopes, much as he pretended to the contrary.

The sun was hot all day, and at night the breeze was sultry. On the next day there was a thunderstorm. The sea was not rough. It rose and fell with a strange uniformity of motion, without breaking. The rain had assuaged the thirst of the two waifs of the sea. Matt had caught it in his hands and laughed over it. He had been more or less feverish from the first. David had held his face up to the great tropic-like drops, and was refreshed.

One desire satisfied, then came hunger. The next day was burning hot. The sun seemed to fire the waters. There was no stir in the air. Matt said another storm was brewing. At night there came heavy mist. It broke now and then into ghostly forms. David awoke feeling faint and weak. He tried to rise, and found that his limbs were stiff and painful. Matt was always busy, whether David

slept or not. He would shade his eyes with his hands and look out into the night just as he did when he could see in the daytime. Then he would mumble and chuckle. Once he had awakened David with his singing. It was an old sea-song that he was trying to remember, ever harking back for the words, and always chuckling when he thought he had snatched them out of his fading memory.

On the third day David felt as if he were dying, so weak, so hopeless, so empty, so incapable of thought.

He lay with open eyes in the stern of the boat watching Matt, who was in a raging fever. It was his particular mania in these last hours to fancy every cloud a sail. He hailed them with cries and laughter. He thought they signaled him. He answered them; he shouted the name of the foundered vessel; at least he thought he shouted it; but his voice was a hoarse whisper; his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

After an hour or two of this mad exercise, waving his arms and answering signals, he suddenly flung himself into the sea. David had neither the strength nor the inclination to attempt his rescue. He stared vacantly at the empty place which Matt White had filled a moment before, and then shut his eyes, as he thought—if he thought at all—in death. He remembered no more until he found himself in the cabin of an Italian vessel homeward bound for Venice.

When he awoke he thought he was in Hartley's Row; then he thought he was on the *Morning Star* after a bad dream. Trying to move he felt his body stiff and sore. He looked round the cabin and noticed that there was another bunk in it, and that by his side were medicine bottles, and wine glasses, and a soup basin. He turned over and tried to collect his faculties. The effort was too much for him, and it was many hours before he again became sensible of his surroundings.

It was one of these curious tricks of Fate that are common enough, however startling they may seem, that Alan Keith should have been sitting on the quay when the captain of the bark *Eldorado* walked by with a young fellow leaning upon his arm. They were on their way to a certain charitable refuge for unfortunate sailors, the boy being no other than Alan's son, whom Father Lavello was moving heaven and earth to find, and for whom the released prisoner of Tafilet had begun to build castles in the air.

Sitting there upon the quay while David passed, he was apparently watching the newly moored ship, with the busy coming and going of sailors and merchants, or looking out over the broad lagoons; but in reality Alan saw none of the sights that lay immediately under his eyes, heard none of the various sounds all about him. He saw a grave in the bosom of the forest of Heart's Content; he saw several cairns at the base of Demon's Rock: he saw between the outlet of the cavern and the log hut where he and Predie and his companions of the captured *Anne of Dartmouth* had whiled away the winter, a certain clump of trees and rock where he had buried his own honest savings apart from the plunder of the *St. Dennis* and other prizes. It was some half recognized instinct of honor that had induced him to keep his own money apart from the treasure of the crews; it might have been conceived in the spirit of fair play with the view to the ultimate division stipulated for in the articles of agreement between him and his men. Some vague idea of devoting this honest gold to the memory of his wife may have influenced him. But as he sat on this bright winter's day, regardless of the chill air that came in little gusts of searching wind from the Adriatic, apparently much engrossed in the *Eldorado* or the shivering lagoons, he experienced no particular feeling in regard to the difference between the treasures in Wilderness Creek and the hidden box on the way to the hut with its natural garden

of berry plants and flowers. He felt a craving to unearth the strange jumble of gold and precious stones, of silver cups and golden ornaments, of laces and silks, and other textiles, embroideries, and strange spices.

His memory carried him back with singular clearness, and considering all that had happened, he had not the remotest doubt that he was the sole inheritor of the secret treasure.

Once a transient shadow of fear crossed his mind in the form of Lester Bentz, and even in his present penitential mood he wished he had killed him. At the same time he came to the conclusion that Bentz could not possibly have known of the hiding of the treasure, and it seemed to him that making them part of the dead, giving them memorials of mortality, was a sufficient disguise for all time, apart from the inaccessibility of the spot and the superstitious dread which belonged to Nasquappe and Demon's Rock.

"My son," he said to himself, as he wandered homewards, taking the narrow, unfrequented ways of the city, and pausing now and then to exchange some curious or friendly greeting, "my son David, it is time ye came for your inheritance; I canna live much longer; I feel ghostly warnin's, noo that I hae made my peace wi' Almighty God and his Blessed Son, it's like I may be caa'd at ony moment; it's borne in upon my distracted mind that I'll see thee soon, and I ken thy face, my dear, as weel as if I'd seen it a' my days; I hae seen it i' the spirit, thy mither leadin' thee by the hand and sayin' in her ain sweet hevanely voice, 'Alan, love, this is David, our dear son!'" That night in his dreams Alan saw his wife and son again, and this time David was no longer wet with the damps and weeds of the sea.

A strange unrest took possession of him after this. He wandered forth into the cold night, took Atilio's boat and rowed himself down the Grand Canal, and let the wind toss him upon the waves of the incoming tide away past the

quay where the *Eldorado* was lying and out upon the lagoons towards the Lido. The thunder of the Adriatic beating upon the sandy barriers within which slept the ocean city, recalled to him the rollers of the Atlantic outside the harbor of Wilderness Creek.

It was on the next day that the English consul, who had taken an interest in Father Lavello's inquiries, called upon him at his temporary lodging in Venice, to acquaint him with the landing of a young Englishman who said his name was David Keith, and that he had been picked up in an open boat on the homeward voyage of the *Eldorado*, famished with cold and hunger, and for a time thought to be dead. He had, however, survived his terrible privations, and was now in kindly hands at the sailors' retreat near the Arsenal.

Father Lavello went at once to investigate this information, which seemed to him nothing short of miraculous, though, to be sure, it might have chanced that some other ship had picked up the lad and taken him to some other part. The consul said something noble in the aspect of the young fellow, despite his miserable plight, had stimulated the usually benevolent sentiments of sailors toward any unfortunate victim of the sea; and for himself he was bound to say that he also was much impressed by the lad's handsome face and dignified figure.

They had dressed him in sailor garb, something between a pirate and a blue-jacket, and the highest compliment they could pay him was to say that he was the beau ideal of an Italian youth, his hair black, his eyes dark and soft, his face of an olive complexion, and his form as lithe as that of a young fawn. A Moravian from the Lido who visited the house of charity said he was worthy to be the hero of a poem by their great and learned Byron, who some years previously had lived among them, glorifying their language and worshiping Venice.

Perhaps the Moravian found an added beauty in David

for the reason that the young fellow was a Protestant, and while respectful to the priests, let them understand that he and his were of the Reformed faith. But Father Lavello found the boy tolerant and gentle, the more so when he informed him that he had known his mother and father, had confessed them in the days of their courtship, and blessed them at the altar of the Holy Catholic Church when they became man and wife.

"That is," said the curé, "if you are, as I make no doubt, the son of Alan and Hannah Keith, of Heart's Delight."

"So far as I know," said David. "I am. Miss Mumford, who nursed me and carried me to England, told me so, and I was on my way to Newfoundland to claim my patrimony when I was wrecked."

"Indeed; you had some special authority?"

"The authority of the trustees under the will of my grandfather, David Plympton."

"Yes?"

"Proved, I believe, in the courts by my chief, Mr. Waveny Petherick of Yarmouth."

"Yes," said the priest, "with whom you were articled to the law."

"You seem to know me well," said David, smiling. "It is strange to be shipwrecked and brought into Venice to meet one who knew my parents, and who has knowledge of me also."

"It is," said the priest, "and who, until lately, had kept trace of you and your record for the sake of the old days when you were an infant, and your father and mother were members of his flock. Strange! Yes, the ways of God are strange to mortal man; the prayers of your saintly mother have been heard, her intercession has borne fruit, for the Almighty Father is no respecter of persons where the holy intercession of the Blessed Virgin is obtained, and her voice can prevail even though the sinner be Protestant

and outside the pale. Nay, my son, spare me thy answer. Let us give Almighty God thanks for this miracle of thy preservation."

David felt himself subdued by the earnest words and manner of the priest, only venturing to remark that he hoped he had been spared for some good work in the world.

"A pious and worthy ambition," said the priest, "and be sure it is so; your future shall be remarkable for good; for you have been miraculously saved, and for such a meeting, in this city of marvels, as your wildest dreams can hardly have forecasted. That you are a Protestant, and desire it to be so known, argues a certain piety; it is the man of no religion, the infidel, the scoffer, for whose soul the Church is most solicitous. You have prayed to God? You have thanked God for your deliverance?"

"Yes, with all my heart and soul," said David, catching something of the religious tone of the priest's manner; "surely the worst of God's creatures would have done that, had he been raised from the dead as I have been, for my preservation almost amounts to that. The doctor said so only yesterday when we parted; and, in truth, when I last shut my eyes in that boat at sea, it was to die, and when I awoke, it was as if I had been dead and had come to life again."

"Was lost and is found, was dead and is alive again," said the priest.

"I wish your reference applied in full to my case, sir," said David, "even though I should be called a prodigal and had herded with swine."

"Who shall say what a merciful and all-seeing God may not have in store for you! I am surely his messenger to you in this miraculous deliverance. Are you strong enough to receive tidings of as great joy as that of your own deliverance to those who shall learn of it when most they think you lost? Your foster-mother, for example."

"And the girl who is betrothed to me," said David, "they will hear of the loss of the *Morning Star*, and it will break their hearts."

"We must take means to acquaint them of your safety," said the curé, "I will obtain the aid of the English consul for that purpose without delay."

"Thank you, oh, thank you," said David, more deeply moved than he had yet shown himself.

"You are very young to marry?" said the priest.

"When one loves sincerely, and Elmira's father is willing, and my foster-mother approves, and Mr. Waveny Petherick does not object, and one can provide a home, a year one way or the other is no serious matter?"

David made this statement rather in the way of asking a question than propounding a decision.

"Perhaps not," said the curé, "since you are so far pledged, let us hope there can be no other objection."

"What a blessing it is that my London trustee sailed before me, or rather not in the *Morning Star*. He was to prepare the way for my coming, and meet the *Morning Star* at Halifax."

"It cannot be but the Divine hand is strongly in all this," said the curé; "but you did not answer me? Are you strong enough to receive a further shock, not an unhappy one, but a shock; I am something of a physician, let me see."

He took David's hand and felt his pulse; "We must not put you back into a fever. A little rest and I will come to you again."

"I am strong enough for anything, sir," said David, "have no fear for me; I think I have passed a physical examination that should answer for me. You have something strange to tell me, something you are anxious to disclose, what is it?"

David drew himself up and faced the priest, recalling to

Father Lavello the figure of the settler who, in the stormy days of Heart's Delight, defied Admiral Ristack, and softened only at thought of his saintly wife, the rose of that desert by the sea.

"I will take you at your word. Put this cloak about you and come with me."

The curé took up a cloak that was hanging upon the wall and they went out together.

"The air is chilly," said the priest, "it is not always summer, even in Venice."

He beckoned for a gondola. David took a seat in the gloomy-looking boat. The priest following, directed the solitary gondolier to the Turkish Palace, and sat silently contemplating the water and the procession of buildings with their vistas of back canals, and collecting his thoughts for the coming interview of father and son.

Alan Keith sat smoking in his decayed yet palatial room. He had folded his long gaberdinish coat about him ; round his neck was loosely wrapped a crimson silk scarf. He was sitting in a tall armchair that had an elaborately carved back. At his elbow was a small table upon which lay an open book. The room was large, with pillars and a vestibule at one end, and an alcove-bed at the other, where Alan was sitting. The walls were gay with the colors of half-defaced frescoes. There were heavy tapestried portieres over the doorways ; and small windows here and there blinded with dust. The marble floor was in lovely tone from an artistic point of view, and it was covered here and there with mats and rugs.

"Alan," said the priest, having bidden David remain within shadow of the vestibule, "our prayers and the intercession of your saintly wife with the Holy Mother of God have prevailed."

Alan turned his bright eyes toward the priest as if inviting further speech.

"Be calm, dear friend," was the curé's response.

"I am calm," said Alan, laying down his long pipe. "What is it?"

"God has sent your son to Venice," said the priest.

"Praised be His holy name!" Allan replied.

The priest stepped back to beckon David, who came forward.

"This is your father," said the priest.

"David, I expected you," said the father, controlling himself with a mighty effort, but only for a moment. "I expected you!"

David looked at his father, and a sharp cry of surprise escaped him.

"Oh, my God!" Alan exclaimed, stepping toward the boy and opening his arms. David burst into tears and buried his face in the old man's neck.

Father Lavello stealthily withdrew.

Alan rocked the tall fellow in his arms and crooned in a pathetic way over him for some moments, and then thrust him apart to gaze upon him.

"My dear David, my son, my ain son, what a miracle! After a' these heart-breakin' years, to see ye in the flesh, to hear your voice! Eh, man, but I haena heard your voice. Speak to me, David."

"Father," said the lad.

"Aye, but gae on; tell me where ye hae come frae; talk to me! I hae hard work to keep mysel' frae yellin' oot like a maniac."

"Sit down, father," said David, "and calm yourself."

"Don't leave me, lad!" exclaimed Alan; "where's your mither? Hannah, ye hae brought him hame, but ye hae left us!"

Alan sat down in his chair again, still keeping David's hand in his.

David looked round the room, and felt too as if he might

have lost his senses, as if he had eaten of the insane root, so many strange things had happened to him since he went by coach to Bristol and took his berth on board the *Morning Star*.

"Forgie me, David, if I amna quite mysel'. Ye see your sainted mither has brought ye to me sae often in my dreams that it seems as if she too might be here, though I ken weel enough she's dead and buried years and years agone. Nae, lad, I'll be mysel' in a minute."

The gaunt figure once more rose up and stood by the side of the young lithe waif of the sea.

"Tak houd o' my airm; let us walk about and pinch oorsel's and be sure we are awake," he said, pulling the boy's arm within his own and pacing the apartment with him.

"Ye think me a strange father; some o' these foolish kind folk in this city call me the mad Englishman; I'm nae mad, David, though I might hae been excused for such a fa', considerin' what I hae gane through. I'm neither mad nor poor, David; ye shall find I'm rich, my son, rich, far mair than even Lavello dreams; I hae been waiting to tell ye; I hae toud them nought, Lavello kens a little, but it's nought to what I hae got to tell ye, David! But ye look faint, ye arena strong, we'll hae some food and drink. Hallo, there, Atilio, Terese. We'll kill the fatted calf, David; we'll open our best wine—we'll drink and be merry—was lost and is found—was dead and is alive again."

Once more overcome with excitement, Alan staggered back to his seat, and David soothed him with filial words of comfort.

"I'm just an auld fool," said Alan presently. "I thought I was what the priest ca's a stoic, and I'm just an auld fool. David, sit ye doon, and feel ye are at hame, and I'll just mak an effort to be mysel'. Eh, but it's sae lang sin' I had ye for a son. It just drives me wild to think o' it."

The gondolier and his wife came running in.

"Quick," said Alan, "food and wine; all ye've got; the fatted calf—the best of everything; this is my son."

He rose up with a haughty wave of his bony hand as he made this declaration.

The Italian servants expressed their surprise and delight. Terese said the young signor was as tall as his father. The gondolier told David that his father was the kindest man in the world. Terese added that dinner was nearly ready and proceeded with Atilio's assistance to drag forth a table near the stove and began to lay the cloth. Father Lavello, as the servants withdrew, thought it a happy moment to return.

"Eh, man," said Alan, "ye're just in time. Let me introduce ye—David, my son, this is my good friend and confessor, Father Lavello, wha kenned ye when ye were just a baby."

For the moment Alan had forgotten that it was the priest who had brought his son to him.

"My dear David Keith," said the curé, "I congratulate you upon this happy meeting."

"But I'm forgeting," said Alan, "and ye maun forgie me, for I'm a leetle beside mysel'; it was you, dear friend, who found him, you who have been God's instrument of kindness in a' this. Forgive me. David, I'd nivver a seen ye again but for Father Lavello."

"The good father came to me at the Home, where the captain secured me a lodging," said David, "and has earned my eternal gratitude."

"Here's the dinner," said Alan, as the servants came in with some smoking dishes. "Father Lavello, this is the feast, nae, I winna say for the prodigal son, I'll just say for the prodigal father; and I wish it was a better repast; but we'll make up for it in the choicest Chianti. Come noo, let's fa' to. I ken this lost and is foond, God bless him, is both a-hungered and a-thirst."

Father Lavello asked a blessing upon the feast; and the three fell to heartily.

During the meal, David, responding to his father's questions, gave him some particulars of his life, and his adventures in the *Morning Star*. Although he had spoken of Elmira to the priest he made no mention of her over dinner. Something made him pause when her name was on his tongue. He felt as if the declaration of his engagement was now a matter to be privately mentioned to his father. Alan drew from the curé stories of their past experiences of Newfoundland, and Alan himself talked of Heart's Delight, and wondered what it was like after all those years!

He was much interested when David spoke of Miss Mumford, and Alan thereafter repeated, not without some bitterness, the story of his capture, and Pat Doolan's account, related to him long afterward, of his rescue of Sally and Baby David from the king's buccaneering law-powerful scoundrels. He laid down his knife and fork and listened with eyes and ears to David's account of Sally's home and Petherick's office; and every now and then, in a kind of stage aside, when Father Lavello was most engaged with his meat and wine, he would say to his son, "Bide a wee, my son, just bide a wee, and I'll tell ye a story that'll make the blood dance in your young veins; bide a wee.' David would nod knowingly in return, falling in with his father's humor, and putting his warning promise down to the upset of their meeting.

But David had by no means taken the measure of his father, Alan Keith; nor had Father Lavello, his friend and confessor. In all his dreams, during all his confessions, not in any single narrative of adventure, nor when most he appeared to be unburdening himself, had the mad Englishman of Venice disclosed the secret of the buried treasure of Wilderness Creek.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"ALWAYS TO-MORROW."

IT was with closed doors and in secret that Alan Keith confided to his son, David, the mysteries of Wilderness Creek.

The gondolier Atilio and his wife Terese were a-bed. Father Lavello had gone home to his snug quarters at Verona. David had been allotted a corner of his father's apartment. Terese had made up a snug bed for him with a curtain round it. The Turkish custodian was dreaming on his couch in a niche of his own private chamber overlooking the quadrangle.

Alan and David were keeping themselves warm with wine and tobacco. Winter is of such short duration in Venice that a fire is a luxury but little known. The German stove and the open grate are innovations of the present day. Furs, cushions, wraps, and among the old and poor the *scaldini*, were almost the only protection against the cold. David and Alan sat with their feet upon a couple of large cushions, that neutralized the chill of the marble floor. Wise people who feared the cold were in bed, or huddled together in some *café* where animal heat, a few lamps, and the absence of ventilation kept the topers warm.

Handsome even in decay was the spacious room where David listened with awe and wonder to such parts of his father's story as Alan thought well to narrate. Two or three sconces on the wall with long-wicked candles flickered upon frescoed panels and deepened the shadows of recesses and cupboards. There were no lights in the old bronze chandelier that swung from the painted ceiling, but

the table held an oil lamp, a tall flagon of wine, pen, ink, and paper, a Dutch tobacco box of embossed silver, which the Turk had lent his lodger-guest, one or two Nuremburg goblets, a glass flask of Chianti, and other things in artistic disorder.

Alan sat facing his son, who found it a special comfort to smoke. It soothed his nerves and helped him to keep his countenance and hold his tongue. More than once he had come to the conclusion that his father was mad ; all through his intercourse with him he was fascinated by the old man's remarkable personality.

"I question if I hae been strectly reight in keepin' a' this back in confession," said Alan, "but I am nae reightly a true Catholic, havin' been brought up i' the Protestant faith, sae I mun get Father Lavello's forgiveness on that account ; he's a generous priest, and besides we'll gie the Church somethin' to mak absolution easy."

"There's no effectual confession that is not made to our Father which art in Heaven," said David, quoting unconsciously from Mildred Hope, "and no person between the sinner and his God can help him except the interceder, Christ, Our Lord."

"Ye've ta'en to religion then, David ?" said his father interrogatively, while filling his long quaint pipe from the Turk's silver tobacco jar.

"I don't profess much in that way," said David, "but Miss Mumford has a friend who talks religion to us, and my rescue from the sea has made me feel that her prayers and God's goodness may be the reason why I am sitting here at this time."

"Aye lad, you're reight, and what a mercy it is ! We needna mak a theological discussion o' that, David ; as for sects and denomenations and the like, your mither belonged to that other church, sae I tuk up wi' it because she was mair to me, David, than a' the churches on airth.

And the last I ken o' her when she waur happiest, she was just pressin' you to her breast. It's a lang time to luke forward frae your age to mine, but to luke back—weel they say truly when they say life's just a span. Man, it's nae mair than a day to luke back upon, a butterfly's day, a bit o' sun, and then storm and stress, old age and death. The sun is for you, David. And by the might o' bonnie Scotland, ye shall hae it. Your path shall be paved wi' goud an grouted in wi' precious stones. It shall, my laddie, it shall!"

Alan laid down his pipe and paced the room. The tapestried portiere stirred as if with the action, but it was the wind that had crept though crevice and doorway to moan and tell of the chills without.

"Wad to heaven," the old man went on, "ye might find some o' the brood o' Ristack and Ruddock and Bentz to get your hand on their throats, to trample on them, to grind them, to tear them down, them and their household gods and—nae, but I maun forget a' that. I hae had my revenge; the Lord delivered my enemies into my hands, and I smote them, hip and thigh."

The remembrance of the capture of the *Anne of Dartmouth* ignited long slumbering fires. Alan laughed a wild laugh that stirred the sleep of the Turk in his mattressed niche. He uttered a prayer to Allah and went off again into dreams and forgetfulness.

"Down, ye imp of hell! Aye, but I made ye lick the dust! And your rear admiral, how he crackled and spluttered in the fire. But God hae mercy on me! I had repented o' a' that; and the gude priest had granted me absolution and rest!"

He paused, looked round and saw David, who was watching him, fearing he had gone mad.

"Forgive me, David, my son, I amna mysel' once now and again, and it's hard to realize that ye can be here by

my side ; nae, dinna think I'm daft. Eh, but I hae suffered sae, it wouldna be surprisin' if I were ; it's just wonderfu' I'm as rational as I am."

He sat down by the stove, took up his pipe, and laid his right hand upon David's head.

"It's over, laddie; it was just a fit o' keen remembrance; it's over, I find it hard to be sure I amna dreamin' a' the time ; your saintly mither sat by me i' the dungeon as ye are sitting now, and—but there, she was just a spirit, I never touched her hand as I touch yours, and naebody else saw her, only me, David, only me."

David took his father's hand, remarking, "I am flesh and blood, father; there's no mistake about me ; but I can understand your fancying strange things ; I do myself ; I wake in the night shivering in that boat at sea, with poor old Matt White, of the Welsh Back, signaling imaginary sails. Take another cup of wine, father, and let me give you a light."

David passed the flagon of Chianti, and lighted a spill at the smoldering fire, and Alan smiling drew a long breath, and sent the blue wreaths of smoke up into the shadows of the painted ceiling.

"That's a' reight ! Noo, David, look at this ; it's a bit o' the map o' North America, showing the coast o' Newfoundland to Labrador ; I tore it frae a chart I bought i' the Square a week or twa back."

He laid upon the table a strip of paper, and held over it a small hand lamp that might have lighted an ancient doge to read his missal, so quaint and old was it, and yet so fitting to the bony hand of Alan Keith, so much in keeping was it with his glittering eyes, his long face, and his picturesque robes.

"The names are in Italian, but I hae marked the points in English, sae that in case we are not destined to complete our voyage together, ye may find your way alone. Here,

ye see, is St. John's,—this, by the way, is Halifax—from St. John's, ye ken, running north here is the coast line; here is Heart's Delight."

He paused as his long forefinger rested at the point he had especially marked, and heaved a sigh that almost brought the tears to David's eyes.

"At the back o' Heart's Delight," went on the old man, reseating himself, and putting the lamp on the table, David standing by his side, "is Heart's Content, or was; and there, beneath the tamarack, lie your sainted mither and our auld dog Sampson, wha thought he was just as strong and capable as I was, but he kenned nought aboot the overwhelmin' numbers and the knife that awaited him; I'll show ye the spot, please God; but I maunna waste time wi' these things, the mair sae that they tear at my heart and disable my mind. The past is deed sae far that we canna bring it back, the future is for the young, it is for you, David. Noo, follow my finger; ye see a' this stretch o' coast; for miles it might be just a vast sea-wall built by God himself, with sneakin' rocks runnin' out into the open that the de'il might hae planted to trap unwary mariners. And sae ye see it goes broken now and then by gaps, and then risin' again into lofty capes wi' their extremities seawards to mark the entrance to the great bays, Conception, Trinity, Bonavista, and Notre Dame. We cross them, d'ye see, and come to the northern headland; ye'll mind the scenery here the longest day ye live, rock o' every imaginable shape, jagged, pointed, tall, short, wi' mighty precipices—keep clear o' them, gie them a wide berth. This point I hae marked strong is Cape Bauld, the northern point of Quirpon, four degrees north o' St. John's. When the sun has loosened the icy cables that haud them, the icebergs o' the frozen north come sailing down here through the Straits o' Belle Isle. That's Belle Isle, d'ye mark, barren, desolate; the cauld air filled, they say, wi' cries o' demons and fiends, wi'

deevils rampant and the like; but that's an auld wife's tale, there are nae demons sae wicked and hellish as man ; I hae stood on the wild shores a' Belle Isle i' the neight, and heard nought but the wind and the breakers, wi' once and again the cries o' neight birds and wild animals. Ssh ! "

The pioneer of Labrador looked round the room and laid a hand upon David's shoulder.

" Ssh ! Ye see the point here ; larboard o' the Isle ? Ye do ! Weel, that's Nasquappe Point ; you see the spots and scratches runnin' frae it seaward. Weel, that is the course to Wilderness Creek—the impossible course to all but ye and me, David. Ye see the promontory that rises to the east of Nasquappe, that's Demon's Rock, the guardian o' oor secret harbor."

He took from a deep pocket beneath his girdle another scrap of paper which he opened and laid before his son.

" This is a sailing chart ; it shows you the course from deep water of Nasquappe into the creek ; every bit o' rock, every bit channel marked to a dead certainty ; no sailin' master could gae wrang wi' it, and an ordinary sailor could work a fishin' smack into the inner harbor wi'oot sae much as a foul o' the slightest consequence. Noo, David, tak these papers, and just one ither."

He folded the papers and gave them to his son.

" The ither one is hardly necessary, but landmarks are landmarks, and it's weel to be safe ; this other bit shows you a spot between the outlet o' Demon's Cave and a clearin' ; not a clearin' by the hand o' man, but a clearin' o' God's own, wi' flowers and fruits i' the summer, and when we find it I mak nae doubt ther'll be the remains o' a habitation. Ye see on this paper I hae marked distances frae landmark to landmark, rock to rock, tree to tree ; just as in the ithers, I set down the latitude and longitude to the finest point, and proper tokens o' distance in the matter o'

the sailing course, heights o' rocks, and something in the matter o' depths o' water, and so on. And now ye are thinkin' what a' this is to lead to. On the eastern shore o' the inner harbor o' Wilderness Creek, at the foot o' Demon's Rock, there are several graves, marked wi' memorials o' such Christian burial as could be vouchsafed at the time. Wilderness Creek was my anchorage when I was feightin' the enemy, when I had joined our brithers of America against their persecutors and mine—aye, and yours, David—persecutors who were the death o' your mither; persecutors who trod out the life o' hearths and hames that should hae been sacred to a' that men houd dear! But I maunna dwell on that. In the midst o' the graves I tell ye of, there are three cairns. They cover three casks o' goud, precious stones, silks, textiles, and ither treasures; and there is one ither, making four, that covers a more miscellaneous store, spices, perfumes, God knows what. And at a point marked on the third bit o' paper, on the heights above, at the north of a jutting rock, a mighty bowlder, near a clump of firs, ye'll find two bags o' guineas, some scrip, a bundle o' Bank of England notes, and sundry like securities, all properly testified, moneys o' your grandfather's and mine, and this ye will keep exclusively for a memorial to your mither on the spot where she is buried, and the rest ye'll invest for your wife and bairns, if ever ye should be blest i' that way. I hae a kind o' sentiment about this money; as for the casks among the graves at the foot o' Demon's Rock, I hae only one condition: gie Heart's Delight a school or church in honor o' Father Lavello; the rest, spend it as ye will; be happy; mak the name of Keith famous; let it be known honorably at Heart's Delight; mak it feared at St. John's; be generous; be happy, and I will no burden ye wi' a word or thocht o' vengeance; indeed, I hae no advice to offer ye; no counsel. I canna offer ye my ain life as an example. Mair humility, less pride, nae thochts o' vengeance would

be Lavello's wish, and he is a good, honest, truly religious man ; practices his preachin', and——"

Here Alan paused, and fell gently back in his chair, the pipe which he had held in his right hand dropped from his fingers.

"What is it, father?" David exclaimed.

Alan smiled, but did not speak.

David took his hand and chafed it. Alan's lips moved. David looked into the cupboard where Alan kept his wine, in the hope of finding some brandy. He found a flask of spirits, and poured a little into a glass which he tasted ; it was a liqueur. Just as he was about to press the glass to his father's lips the old man heaved a deep sigh and moved his hands. "Don't be afeard," he whispered, "I was overwrought, I amna sae young as I was."

"Thank God, you are better," said David, "let me lead you to bed, it must be morning."

"Aye, it is," said Alan, still very softly, "it's five o' the clock. Ye'll find the brandy in a square bottle that looks like Geneva, it's down by the right on the floor."

David started for the square black bottle and found it. Alan had risen to his feet, steadying himself by the back of his chair.

"I'm an auld man, David," he said, still weakly, and in measured terms, "but I hae toud ye a' that's necessary, and to-morrow we'll lay our plans."

He took from David's hand a glass of cognac, drained it, sighed, and, smiling, moved from the chair.

"I'm a' reight, David, just a bit weak. I tak it as a warning my mission's aboot at an end ; God has been ower gude to me to bring ye here toward the close ; aye, laddie, I'll gang to bed ; to-morrow we'll tak' counsel aboot the sailin'; to-morrow ! D'ye nae ken i' this wee bit life, David, that it's a'ways to-morrow, the gude we hope for, the blessings we pray for—always to-morrow !"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE BLISS OF LOOKING FORWARD.

A STRANGE night for David.

His father lay in an alcove of the great salon, which was his share of the palace since he had come into money. For hours David sat by his side and watched.

The old man slept peacefully. His breathing was regular. He did not stir. There were not observable even the twitchings and movements that are seen in a dog's sleep. David sometimes wondered if he would wake again.

As morning began to creep in through the dusty windows, David wrapped himself up in his coat and a rug, and lay down. He had not been asleep, as it seemed to him, but a few minutes when he was disturbed by the gondolier who had brought in his father's rolls and coffee, with an extra supply for David. The truth is the boy had only been asleep an hour. It was eight o'clock.

"I knew Terese had made up a bed for you, signor," said the gondolier, "but I did not know you made the night of it, as you say in the English. I disturb you too early, eh?"

"No, thank you," said David, "I shall be glad of the coffee."

"Si, signor, but the master, the illustrissimo, he still sleep; ah! then you sit up very late, it is a festival when son meet father."

Alan Keith slept on. His long arms lay outside the coverlet; his face was serene; neither David nor the attendant said so, but they both thought it was beautiful. The gondolier found it like one of the fine monuments in

the church of San Marco. He made a remark to that effect to his wife during the day. David looked at the recumbent figure and was afraid. But while he gazed his father awoke.

"It's a' true," he said, stretching his right arm toward David, "a' true. Gie me your hand, my son. How have you slept?"

"Not too well," said David, "but I don't mind that; I'll sleep to-night. You have slept, father, the sleep of the just, the sleep of the blessed. I have never seen anything like it."

"Nor have I ever felt so refreshed on awakenin', David. Lad, it's the first real rest I hae had sae lang as I can remember; the sleep o' a tired, contented man, dreamless as the dead. I was worn out, lad, dog-tired, and I just feel a new man. I'm afeard I scared ye; I was just a wee bit scared mysel'; but it was nature giving out, weary for a rest after years and years o' waitin', wi' a secret that was burnin' into the very life o' me, wi' a longin' beyond a' imagination. David, we'll celebrate the day."

The sun came out bravely. For an hour or two it was almost summer.

Alan talked of Venice, and showed it to his son with an air of ownership.

They breakfasted at a *café* in the Square of St. Mark's more luxuriously than David had ever breakfasted before. They drank their wine, and watched the busy throng, and listened to the Austrian band.

Many persons saluted the picturesque old man, and smiled upon him with a sort of pitying admiration. The mad Englishman had become almost an institution of the city, more especially since his ship had come in, as Father Lavello had described the opening of his banking account.

Without understanding a word they said, David could gather the Venetians looked upon his father very much in

the way he had been more than once inclined to regard him, as a kindly dreamer, one whose troubles and disasters had turned his head, and with a divine charity in the direction of a fortune of buried treasure ; and yet his father had been so explicit and so clear in his account, so definite in his chart and plans, and his story filled up so much of what had hitherto been blank to David, that he only doubted for a moment, while he believed for hours and days ; and now he began to feel anxious in the direction of Caister ; anxious, to be gone even from this Paradise of the sea, to tell Elmira of his great fortune and to make arrangements for a siege of the rocky coast of Labrador. That, of course, was not to be thought of until the first days of summer should begin to loosen the icy bonds of the coast and make navigation possible in its most difficult waters.

"This is my son," Alan would say now and then, in his queer Italian, to acquaintances and others who paused to bid him good-day. They would smile and wish him well ; but one or two had heard the story of the wreck and the landing of the young English sailor. These stopped to talk and chatter and shake the lad's hand.

"He will be rich," said Alan to a friend of the absent Lavello ; "I am to fit oot a ship for him i' Venice, a bark as tight and trim as the hand o' man can make it."

Nobody took Alan seriously, but he took their nods and smiles for friendliness and good neighborship ; and so all was well.

"Let us go in and thank God !" said Alan after David had feasted his eyes on the gold-fronted glories of St. Mark's. They entered with others while the choir was filling the strangely beautiful temple with music that was divine. David passed the *bénitier*, but knelt by his father's side, and his heart beat devoutly ; he wept silently, thanked God for his preservation, and prayed for the blessing of his protecting hand on the ocean paths that still lay before him.

From St. Mark's they wandered about the city, following its narrow paths, loitering in its little squares, tarrying at its shop windows, and basking in the welcome winter sun that shone upon Beau Rivage, whence they took a gondola and floated by the palaces of the Grand Canal, coming to an anchor for dinner at the little *café* by the Rialto, where the Turkish guardian of the ancient palace was solemnly refreshing himself. They talked, these two, Alan and the Turk, without understanding much that either of them said ; and after dinner Alan incited the other frequenters of the place to join him in a flagon of Chianti. Later, when the sun had disappeared, and the moon had taken up the marvelous story of the day and night, David and his father walked home to their chilly room, where Terese had done all she knew to make it comfortable. The lamps and the candles were lighted, and, before they were well sat down in their rugs and cushions, she entered with black coffee and cognac.

Father and son lighted their pipes, and then it was that David unfolded to his father those experiences, engagements, and desires that were nearest to his heart.

While David spoke of the cottage at Caister, and the creek where Zaccheus hauled up his dingey, and other fishermen dragged ashore their yawls, he saw, in imagination, the sun shining upon it; the trackless dunes, the blue sea, and the garden full of flowers—more particularly the seat with its figurehead and its hollyhocks—with Elmira in every picture. Alan sat and smoked and sipped his coffee, and offered by way of comment encouraging little monosyllables, and watched the glowing face of the lad as the boy's love brought the blushes to his cheeks.

"I see it a'," said Alan presently ; "dinna ye waste your breath, laddie, and there's nae need for ye to blush ; she's your sweetheart, Elmira Webb ; a gude lassie, the daughter of a gude father. The sea maks brave, gude men, David, and honest, wholesome wenches. I'll back your own heart

to hae selected weel, and ye hae my consent reight off, and God bless ye baith!"

Alan reached out his long arm, took David's hand, and pressed it with a long, fond grip.

"There's naught ennobles a man sae much as a true and honest love. David, we'll mak a queen o' her! She shall deck hersel' in the finest jewels that the *St. Dennis* won frae timid hearts to hand over to British bulldogs; ye'll see, lad! David, I seem to hae renewed my youth sin' last neight. I ken a' ye feel this minute; ye are like the Psalmist sighin' for wings; and ye shall hae them, lad. There's a fine, well-found ship i' port—an East Indiaman bound for London. We'll sail together, and ye shall tell your lassie, 'This is my father,' and I'll talk wi' the man, Zaccheus Webb, aboot the men that gae doon to the sea in ships. And mayhap it might be best to fit oot our bark for Newfoundland at Bristol or Plymouth; and we could then tak a trip to Dartmouth and see the country where your grandfather's folk hailed frae. Nay, on second thoughts, that will be a good country to steer clear frae, lest we be detained wi' discoveries o' the cursed brood o' Ristack and the rest. I'm gaein' to be wise and discreet, with the wisdom o' the serpent, as puir auld Doolan used to say; I'm just a man o' peace, David; a man wi' a vast stake i' the country oot yonder."

David, with a passing thought of how Yarmouth and Caister would open their eyes at his tall and bony father, with his deep-set eyes, his long, thin hands, his strange gait and manner, and his curious dress, was, however, nothing loath to have his companionship across the sea. He felt sure that Elmira would forgive his foreign and ancient looks when she knew that he was rich; though the secret of Wilderness Creek was not to be shared by mortal soul outside father and son.

And so the youthful and only survivor of the peaceful

Morning Star, and the only survivor of the fighting brigantine *St. Dennis*, sailed from the quay at Venice out into the Adriatic, bound for the London docks. No shadow of the impending heartache and trouble that waited David on his return to the scene of his looked-for happiness fell upon his homeward journey. It followed the blessed dispensation of Providence that David should have no fore-knowledge of the evils that awaited him, while on the back-going track of Alan, his father, the flowers of forgetfulness and consolation were blossoming freely and shedding sweet and unlooked-for perfumes.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS.

"MRS. LONGFORD-WEST at home?" asked Mr. Harry Barkstead, dismounting from his horse at the hall door of Filby House, a rambling two-story mansion surrounded with gardens in which close-clipped lawns and ornamental yews were quaint and restful features of the place.

"Yes, sir," said a smart footman, with the servile courtesy of a town servant.

"Dobbs, put up my horse for an hour; give him some oats," said Harry, addressing Mrs. Longford-West's head groom, who was passing in the direction of the stables.

"Yes, sir," said Dobbs, taking charge of a chestnut that was just beginning to show the effects of a hard gallop, his neck wet, his mouth white with foam.

"A word with you, Mr. Barkstead," said Mrs. Cooper, the housekeeper, who appeared on the scene as the hall door closed. "This way, if you please."

Harry followed Mrs. Cooper, beating his leather breeches just a little impatiently, and she led him into her own room in the kitchen wing of the house. Here she turned on him a face paled with anger.

"What is it, Mrs. Cooper?" said Harry.

"Stop your visits to the lodge, and put no more of your verses into the alder tree by the ten-acre meadow, d'ye hear?"

"Does Jessie object to my visits and my verses?"

"I object to them."

"But I don't go to the lodge to see you, nor do you inspire my verses, Mrs. Cooper."

"No, but if you go to the lodge again to see Jessie, you'll see me," said Mrs. Cooper, her lips white with passion, her hands trembling.

"Shall I? Then I won't go again, Mrs. Cooper."

"God knows if the mischief is not already done," was the reply; "if it is, look to it, Mr. Barkstead. If the girl is but an orphan, she is not without friends."

"I hope not," said Harry.

"And Norfolk's not without law either, for that matter, and Justice Barkstead, though he's your father, will hardly see even his son bring ruin upon the helpless and the innocent, though, if report does not wrong you, there's many a girl that could accuse you."

Having mastered her first emotion, Mrs. Cooper found her words come freely, and the more she said the more she felt she had to say.

"Indeed," said Harry. "Did Mrs. Longford-West know that you were going to honor me with these pleasant remarks?"

"No, sir; but I dare say she knows you well enough not to trust you any further than she can see you. She can take care of herself."

"Oh, you think so," said Harry; "shall I tell her what you say? Is the position of housekeeper at Filby House so poor a place that you can afford to throw it away? Or have you feathered your nest so well that you are thinking of retiring with some happy man into a snug little tavern, 'good accommodation for man and beast?'"

"I can afford anything, Mr. Henry Barkstead, but to see my motherless niece go to the bad without an effort to save her."

As she spoke she drew a necklace from her pocket and flung it at his feet.

"And there's the bauble you gave her. Take it and put it round the neck of some other softie who is fool enough to listen to your honeyed lies and promises."

"Very well, since you wish it," said Harry, fishing it from the floor with his riding whip.

"Ah, I don't doubt ye," said Mrs. Cooper, opening the door in reply to Mrs. Langford-West's bell. "Good-morning, Squire Barkstead, the mistress is waiting to receive you."

"Look here, Mrs. Cooper," said Harry. "I look over your rudeness, firstly, because you are in anger, and secondly, for the sake of your pretty little niece. Good-evening."

As he closed the door, Mrs. Cooper flung herself into a chair and burst into tears.

Mrs. Longford-West was a rich widow. She had been twice married, and scandal said she ought really to have been thrice a widow, though she was only five-and-thirty, and did not look her age within some years. Blonde, buxom, ample of bust and figure, just tall enough not to be dumpy, she was the picture of health, and had a free and hearty manner that made men happy and at home in her society, and most of her lady visitors ill at ease, not to say uncomfortable.

She brought from her house and society in town the unrestrained manners of its loosest social circles, and enjoyed the confusion they created among stranger guests who called upon her for the first time. Nevertheless, she managed to make herself popular in the county. She gave freely to everything and to everybody; to the church, the races; subscribed liberally to the hunt; patronized public institutions in a generous way; and so managed to keep on visiting terms, if not with all the best families, at least with such of them as were most before the public.

Sir Anthony Barkstead was her nearest neighbor, and she

made a great point of conciliating his prejudices and opinions as far as she was able; for, truth to tell, she and his gallant and highly educated son and heir were on the very best of neighborly terms; indeed, there were those who thought it even possible that Mrs. Longford-West, if anything happened to old Sir Anthony, might live to be Lady Barkstead. They, who allowed themselves to speculate so far ahead in regard to the future of Mrs. Longford-West, did not know the disposition and character of Harry Barkstead.

"Well, so you have returned, my dear Harry," said the lady of Filby House, giving him her plump, generous hand to kiss. "You are more Quixotic than I think, if the western city had not some other attraction for you beyond seeing that poor young clerk of Petherick's off to sea. Perhaps you had an engagement in Bath, eh?"

"No, I assure you, my dear Libby," said Harry, taking the smiling, unresisting face of madame between his hands and kissing the white forehead, "pure friendship, on my honor!"

"Swear by something more reliable, my dear Harry," said the lady; "honor is for serious, sober men, when they have sown all their wild oats."

"Do you say so?" Harry replied, sitting by her side on a rather uncomfortable Italian couch, "you ought to know."

"You are a brute, Harry," said Mrs. Longford-West, "a perfect brute. What do you mean?"

"That you are the most charming of widows and the most generous of friends," said her visitor, "and I desire to ask the most delightful of her sex to accept a souvenir of that city of the west, which is distinguished because it is the neighbor of the Bath, where first I had the honor of meeting Mrs. Aylesbury Norton."

"You are very cruel, Harry; you know I hate the name

of Norton. However I came to marry into such a family, Heaven only knows. I never should if I had met dear Longford-West before my young heart was ensnared by Aylesbury Norton."

"And to think it is only five years since all this happened, and I was sowing my first sack of wild oats, as you would say, when I danced that first cotillion with you."

"Don't talk of time; it was made for men who have not the wit, and women who have not the beauty to defy it."

"You certainly have both the wit and the beauty, my dear Libby. But here it is—that little souvenir. They are famous for Eastern gems and antiquities at Bristol, they say. I bought this in College Green—it belonged to an Indian princess."

He opened a richly embossed case and drew forth a quaint brooch with a diamond set in pearls.

"There—do not say you are not always in my thoughts, and believe me when I add that I could not go to Bath for thinking of the happy days that can never return."

"My dear Harry," said the lady tenderly, "you are always the same sweet, irritating, dear good fellow. It is a lovely brooch, thank you so much—and you may kiss me."

Harry put his arms about the ample waist and took his reward heartily, declaring that he did not know what under heaven would happen to him if he should lose his dear, dear Libby.

"Ah, Harry, you have said the same thing to many another woman," was dear Libby's rejoinder.

"No, on my—well, on my soul," he replied.

"I suppose you must be forgiven; young men will be young men; but one day you will have to settle down, you know—and oh! dear Harry, what shall I do then? Unless—but there, it is not leap year."

"Only one year to wait," said Harry. "But don't let us talk about settling down; if I am not called upon to settle

up, I shall not mind. Do you remember what the poet says in the tragedy? 'Widows know so much.'"

"You are a wicked scamp," said Mrs. Longford-West; "widows are poor, libeled, innocent creatures; their only fault is that they are too tender, too forbearing with the men; self-denial is their only fault. Take poor me for instance. To save my life I couldn't help confessing that I love you—why should I, when you know it?"

"My dear, good, generous Libby," exclaimed Harry, taking another kiss from the full, liberal lips of his hostess, and then rising to go.

"Why so soon?" she asked.

"Business, dear," he said; "business of importance at Yarmouth; a personal message to the chief magistrate from Sir Anthony."

"Truly?" she asked.

"Truly," he replied. "May I ring for Dobbs to bring my horse?"

"Oh, yes, if it must be so," she replied.

Harry rung, the horse was ordered, and guest and hostess were about to part when Harry said, "By the way, the girl at the lodge—Jessie. Mrs. Cooper seems to think that a little civility I paid the girl has turned her head—the truth is——"

"Only a little civility?" remarked Mrs. Longford-West, with a strong note of interrogation.

"My dear Libby, now that is unkind; you know I am fond of gardening and that your man Dunn has no rival as a florist. I am sure Sir Anthony would give him any wages if he were free, which of course he never will be so long as his mistress loves flowers, and he glories in making Filby House the paradise it should be with such an Eve—I mean such a goddess."

"Now I know there is something wrong, Harry; you are paying compliments for the mere sake of talking. What is it?"

"Well, between ourselves, that is exactly what I asked Mrs. Cooper, who desired a few words with me as I came in; and all I could gather was that she wished me not to look in at the lodge any more. I hate mysteries, as you know, so I thought I would mention it; one gets the reputation of being a gallant, however unworthy one is of the title—a *Lovelace*, as an old fool of a guardian once called me in the Park—and it is all over with a fellow. Ah, well, one day, as you say, the oats will all have been sown; meanwhile, dearest Libby, *au revoir!*"

"The reprobate," said Mrs. Longford-West, "the scamp, the prodigal! Oh, you goose, Libby Longford-West—you idiot, you foolish *Clarissa!* You cannot help loving him; they may, indeed, truly say that the first sigh of love is the last of wisdom!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

HE CALLED IT LOVE.

It was a glorious day in September—the roads hedged with hips and haws and gay with browning leaves. The sky was bright, the wind was fresh. Sportsmen were in the stubbles and the turnips. The crack of their guns was heard afar, and the light whiffs of smoke from their burnt powder marked the occasional groups of gunners following the poor brown-coated partridge. Harry was in high spirits. He might have been riding forth on some right worthy mission, so merry was he, talking to his horse, singing snatches of old ballads, laughing now and then, and returning the greetings of passers-by with a bright, cheerful face that more than one mischievous wench turned round to gaze upon, but never unnoticed by the distinguished looking young horseman.

I'd not walk'd in that garden,
The past of half an hour,
When there I saw two pretty maids,
Sitting under a shady bower.
The first was lovely Nancy,
So beautiful and fair,
The other was a virgin,
Who did the laurel wear.

He trolled out Zaccheus Webb's favorite song in a jovial, merry way, and later it pleased his mood to chant a snatch of "The Miller of the Dee," giving more particularly full emphasis to "I care for nobody and nobody cares for me."

The trot of his horse suited the measure of the rhyme, and the cheeriness of the day was in harmony with the song.

"A dare-devil," said the toll-gate man to a carter who made way for the young squire. "None more so, I've heard say," was the carter's response; and Harry, pulling up his horse to gather a sprig of honeysuckle, which he stuck into his buttonhole, toasted the women, as *Charles* toasted them in Sheridan's famous comedy——

> Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen,
> Here's to the widow of fifty;
> Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
> And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

He was encouraging his low ambition; the ambition of the gallant, the libertine, the deceiver of women. His best impulses presenting themselves in opposition now and then, he beat up ribald songs or started selfish thoughts to keep lust and passion in the van. He was like a savage on the warpath beating his tom-tom and shouting his warcry. He regarded women with but little more consideration than the sportsman he had passed regarded partridges. Both were game to his mind, and his mind was common in those days among bucks and dandies. Such men counted their conquests as the North American Indian counted his scalps. There are singular creatures walking about disguised as honest men in these days and will be to the end of time; for God makes such things, unless it is as Mirian suggested in the poem, that "the devil slavers them so excellently that we come to doubt who's strongest, He who makes or he who mars."

It is hardly conceivable that Harry Barkstead, fresh from seeing his friend off on a long sea journey and charged with sweet and tender messages to the girl who was pledged to be David Keith's wife, could contemplate the villainy that *Mephistopheles* instigated in *Faust;* a villainy indeed a thousand times blacker, and yet a villainy not altogether wholly inspired of the devil or of Barkstead's own depraved

mind, but half inspired by the girl herself ; half encouraged by her coquetry, her vanity of conquest, her ambition to be admired, her love of dress, and her consciousness of physical charms calculated to attract, and therefore the more necessary to be guarded, the more blessed to have for the bestowal upon a true and pure love.

He called at Hartley's Row, having promised David that he would do so. It would please Miss Mumford, the boy had said, and Mildred Hope would be the happier for his courtesy ; they would also be proud to see him. Oh, yes, he called. They were both there, Mildred and Sally, both looking equally sad. He cheered them with good news, told them of the fine ship David had been lucky enough to sail in, spoke of his comfortable berth, and made some sentimental remark about the ship's name that quite took Mildred Hope, who felt for a moment in her heart—great heart in a small body—that after all Mr. Barkstead might not be so callous as she had feared. The *Morning Star !* Yes, it was a name of happy omen, Harry repeated ; he hoped Miss Hope would forgive him for quoting a poet, who was not popular in religious circles, but who really was not wholly bad ; it was from the " Giaour."

> She was a form of life and light,
> That seen became a part of sight,
> And rose, when'er I turned mine eye,
> The morning star of Memory.

" You don't read Byron, of course, Miss Hope," he went on ; " I suppose Mr. Crabbe is more to your liking ? "

" I don't find time to read much," said Mildred, turning her serious eyes full upon him, " but I have read Mr. Crabbe, and I know Aldborough. His books are quite recognized, I hear, in London. We know little of them here, where we should know them best."

" Rather prosy to be called a poet," said Harry, " but means well."

"No doubt," said Mildred.

"I suppose you will be going to Mr. Webb's, sir," remarked Miss Mumford.

"Well, yes," said Harry, "I thought of riding over now. My first business in Yarmouth was to call and see you, and give you David's last messages—his love, you know, and best wishes, and his desire that you should keep up good hearts about him, and so on; and then he charged me to tell Elmira—Miss Webb, I suppose I ought to say—that he will look forward to his return as the happiest day of his life, and all the rest of it. You know the kind of thing a lad would say, Miss Hope, under the circumstances."

Harry's good spirits and the flippant way in which he delivered his messages, the gayety of his manner, the foppishness of his velvet coat, his gold-headed riding whip, his clanking spurs, were out of harmony with the feeling of the two women, and a kind of rebuke to their environment.

Poor Sally Mumford, her heart full of love and anxiety for David; and Mildred Hope, all sympathy for her friend, and with that deeper unspoken love for the lad that Sally only half suspected; they found no ready response to the young squire's messages and comment. There was an awkward pause, during which he tapped his pearl-buttoned gaiters and said he must go now, his mare was a little fretful, and he thought he must give her a rest at the Norfolk, and drive over to Caister with his messages to Zaccheus and Miss Webb. Did they think he should find them at home?

Mildred thought Zaccheus would be fishing. She saw the *Scud* off Gorleston in the early morning, and the Yarmouth men had mostly put out the day before.

"And Miss Webb?" said Harry, "have you seen her?"

"Not since Sunday," said Mildred; "she was at church."

"In a fine new gown," said Miss Mumford, "and a hat fit for a duchess."

"You don't approve of Elmira's fine feathers," said Harry.

"There's time and place for everything," said Sally, "and with David away I must say I did think the girl he has engaged himself to might have considered it in her hat and gown."

Sally spoke a little impulsively, set on to be critical, not so much on account of Elmira's finery, as by reason of the something flippant and thoughtless, to say the least, in the manner of Mr. Barkstead's remarks about David.

"But young ladies, and especially pretty ones, Miss Mumford, have a license in the matter of their toilet, and Miss Webb always dressed a little above her station."

"More's the pity," said Sally.

"David likes to see her in pretty gowns," said Mildred, addressing her friend Sally, "and she has taste, everybody must admit that. Poor Elmira, she has a good heart, and she is right to try and be cheerful. Did you notice how well she sung in the fisherman's hymn, as they call it—a supplication for those at sea?"

"Oh, I have nothing against the dear child," replied Sally, regretting the words she had spoken; "give my love to her, Mr. Barkstead, if you see her, and me and Miss Hope have it in mind to pay her a call to-morrow, and perhaps she will come to tea on Sunday after church. But I will ask her that myself. And you need not mention that I thought her too gayly dressed; it might hurt the gel's feelings, and Heaven knows I don't wish to do that."

"I'm very unhappy," said Sally, when Barkstead had jangled his spurs along the Row, and mounted his horse, "about Elmira; I'm afeard this young man is heartless, and I never believed in the truth of his friendliness for our dear David. It's an awful thing for a gel to be without a

mother; and that Charity Dene's no good; not a ha'porth of sense. As for Zaccheus, why he's away for hours, and sometimes for days. What's to hinder a designing young man like this reckless, prodigal squire, with his fine manners and his grand ways, from making a fool of the lass, when she meets him halfway with her vanity and fal-lals?"

"Comfort you," said Mildred. "Elmira has far more sense than you think; besides she is proud, very proud; in such a girl pride is a good thing, and she loves her father; furthermore, she is engaged to be married."

"I don't care, I wouldn't trust her out of my sight if I was her mother or her aunt or foster, or whatever it might be; she knows little more than how to do her hair and wear her clothes, and she gives her mind to that only to mak folk gossip and set the men a-staring. You talk of her singin' in church; didn't you see every young feller there, as we came out, stare at her, and some of the old ones too? And she just knew all about it. I've no patience with such ways, and especially when iverybody knows that our David, poor lad, is gone to sea and would break his heart if he thought she gave cause for a light word to be said about her while he was away. It's bad enough when he's at home to look after her."

"Poor David! poor Elmira!" was Mildred's response; "we must pray that God will guard the motherless child. I will go and see her every day; she will often listen to me; there is much good in the girl's heart."

"And much vanity," said Sally. "I fear David, with his trusting soul and his faith and honor, has sorrow in store there—yes, I do."

Then Sally began to cry and Mildred made an ingenious feminine effort to soothe her; and all the while Harry Barkstead was making his way to Caister, not driving, as he at first intended, but sitting in the stern of the *Swallow*, which he had found at the jetty with one of Webb's men,

bound for the cottage with some fish and groceries and other trifles that Zaccheus had ordered him to procure and deliver at the old house on the dunes, with a message that "he mought or he mought not come ashore as the case mought be."

It was sunset by the time the *Swallow* ground her keel upon the shore at Caister. A light mist was stealing over the hillocks. The sea was sighing along the sands in long, low waves. Harry assisted the fisherman to haul up the boat. Charity Dene came down from the cottage, her apron over her head. "She was main glad to see the squire; and mighty sure as Miss Elmira would be the same. Miss Elmira had been that lonely she'd lighted a fire in parlor and set her a-practicing of the spinet, and they'd 'a' been expecting of Mistress Mildred Hope; so in the meantime Miss Elmira was playin' of herself and had ben a-singing only just that minnit, as she was a-hopin' her father ud be comin' later on to supper."

And sure enough, while they were walking up to the garden gate, Elmira's voice was heard faintly, and she was singing,

"I was down in Cupid's garden,
For pleasure I did go,
To see the fairest flowers
That in the garden grow."

Elmira had heard that Harry Barkstead had returned; but it cannot be said for a certainty that the fire in the parlor, the new autumn dress, the bunch of flowers on the table, and the song of Cupid's Garden were for him. At the same time it was reasonable to expect he might call; and David would like his friend to be fittingly received.

Harry bestowed upon the hand put forth to greet him a long lingering pressure; and when Elmira protested that he would be shaking hands all night, he sighed and exclaimed, "Ah! if it might be forever!"

Then he leaned pensively against the window and looked out into the garden, and likened the drooping and frost-smitten flowers to his own blighted hopes.

Elmira said she was sorry that parting with David had made him so sad.

Harry in reply said he envied David almost to hating him.

Elmira did not ask for David's messages, but remarked that she did not know why Harry should envy David. The gentleman born did not usually envy the lad who came of ordinary parents, and had his way to make in the world. Elmira said this with a little laugh of derision.

Harry replied that love leveled all ranks, and that beauty elevated the lowliest swain, and with other fine phrases gradually brought Elmira round to thoughts of Harry and not of David.

It is true they did speak of David. Every now and then Harry would drop a word or two of news from Bristol—how happy David was at going, while in his place he (Harry) would not have left the woman he was going to marry for all the gold of an Eldorado. But David was a practical fellow; he was like the happy common people; he thought of a house for his love with some bits of furniture; was as happy as Tom, the fisherman, sitting with his Poll on his knee the day before the wedding. David sent all kinds of fond messages; oh, yes, he did that; so did one of the sailors send his love to Jemima by a rough chap from Cardiff, and there was very much of the same kind of vulgar sincerity in David's messages. "Tell Elmira I know the sort of house she likes; tell her I mean to take her to London for the honeymoon"—poor chap, he would be like a fish out of water in London—"ah, well, he's a good boy, means well, and really believes he is in love."

After a little while, Elmira, who had begun by being somewhat prim, sat down by Harry, on the old chintz-

covered sofa, and permitted him to hold her hand as he described London to her, and Cheltenham, and Bath, and then chatted of Paris and the German spas, dropping in a sighing regret that girls would be in such a hurry to get engaged to be married, before they had seen the world and knew something of life; marriage brought troubles and responsibilities; all very well, of course, when a girl had enjoyed herself a little. And besides, how did a girl know whether she was really in love with a man until she had seen some examples of the sex? Fancy any girl, with any pretensions to beauty, confining her choice to Yarmouth!

"And passing by the handsome and fascinating Harry Barkstead," said Elmira, laughing.

"If Harry Barkstead hadn't been such a fool as to let his friendship for a conceited boy stand in his way, the prettiest girl in the county of Norfolk would have been in his arms at this moment."

"And who may she be?" Elmira asked, with a flash of her dark eyes.

"Oh, you witch!" Harry exclaimed, slipping his arm round her supple waist and kissing her, "you will drive me crazy."

"I think you are already a little gone in that direction," said Elmira, struggling to her feet, her face flushed, but without anything like anger in her eyes.

"Elmira, I love you! I know I am a scamp to say so. I know it is an outrage on friendship; but I can't help it——"

"O Harry!" was Elmira's only answer, though she moved away from the intended embrace that was meant for the conclusion of his declaration.

"You forgive me, don't you?" he asked, as she evaded his touch.

"Oh, yes," she said, "I don't see how I can be angry."

"You always knew I loved you!"

"How should I know when you never told me?"

"If I had, would you now be engaged, as he says you are, to David Keith?"

"That depends."

"Upon what?"

"Oh, don't ask so many questions. Come into the other room; Mrs. Dene will think it odd, and she is always joking me about you."

"Is she?"

"Says I like you best, and thinks you are such a gentleman!"

"I am infinitely obliged to Mrs. Dene," Harry replied.

"Oh, she is a great admirer of yours."

"Before we go, Elmira, may I come again later?"

"How, later?"

"If your father does not come home."

"No, sir, certainly not," said Elmira, her hand upon the door.

"I have so much to say to you."

"Don't you think you have said enough for the present?"

"Elmira," he said, gliding up to her before she had time to move, and laying his hand upon her arm, "say you don't hate me."

"Of course I don't," was the reply.

"Then say you love me."

"Oh! that is a very different thing," she said, but her eyes encouraged the kiss that he pressed silently upon her lips, and as she left him she returned the pressure of his hand.

"Charity," she said, "Mr. Barkstead has some news for you from your friend Mr. David Keith;" and then she went hurriedly to her room and flung herself upon the bed.

After a long talk with Mrs. Dene, Harry said he must go, and he wished to say good-evening to Miss Webb; but

Elmira sent him word that she had a headache and he must excuse her.

"Has she relented?" Harry was saying to himself as he walked along the road toward Yarmouth. "I've known impulsive women do so after the most promising interview. Ah, well! the chief pleasure of capture is in playing your fish. Once fairly hooked, Mrs. Charity Dene must help me with the landing net!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HARRY BARKSTEAD'S LATEST CONQUEST.

THE hours were weeks, the weeks years to Mildred Hope and Sally Mumford since David was no longer at Hartley's Row, and was to be seen no more bounding across the dunes to Webb's cottage, or pushing off the *Swallow* on trips to the *Flying Scud*, or on afternoon sails with the smack-owner's daughter.

They talked of no one else, these two women; except when Mildred felt bound to remember her missionary duties. She found Sally more than usually sympathetic toward women whose husbands were away at sea. No tale of sorrow went to Hartley's Row without relief. Sally said whatever she did she did it because she was sure it would please David.

Mildred upbraided herself in her own room and upon her knees for thinking so much of David ; and yet, the more she tried to put him out of her thoughts, the more he would obtrude. This was even so when she was at prayers. Once she had done penance in a long fast and an increased prison duty on account of a transient feeling of jealousy against Elmira Webb. She found the face of David Keith coming between her and the church, thoughts of him taking place of holy reflections. She took long walks where he had walked, encouraged people to talk of him, even allowed Miss Mumford to continue speaking of the wish that David had chosen her for his wife instead of Elmira.

Mildred Hope was in love with David ; she would not have admitted it even to Sally ; nor would she have denied it, being charged with it. She admitted it in her prayers, and asked for forgiveness ; for was she not wedded to duty,

to the service of the Lord? Had she not bound herself to be one of his shepherds, to watch over his flocks, to visit the sick and needy, to give up her life to his mission?

In her most intense religious moods Mildred felt as keenly the sin she believed she was committing as any nun might have felt under similar circumstances. And yet her love had sweet, dreamy moments in which she built castles in the sunny air of the dunes, with bitter moments to follow when the winds blew from the north and scattered them with the spume of the sea and the red leaves of the autumn.

Poor little Mildred Hope! Why will women think they are strong enough to make vows and take up duties in opposition to impulses of the heart they have never felt, and under the influences of which they may fall at any time? Mildred could not know her destiny any more than any other woman. She had no right to cast her horoscope and act upon her own views of the future. It had all been mapped out for her, no doubt, long before she had any ideas of her own. She could be charitable and religious, she could visit the fatherless and the widows without vowing to herself or to Heaven that she would do nothing else. Nor was all this benevolent activity and self-sacrifice incompatible with falling in love, nor with marriage, and yet Mildred went about as if she had committed a crime, a sacrilege.

Sally Mumford had sleepless nights whenever the wind blew more than ordinarily, and in all her moods that touched David's welfare she blamed Elmira Webb. David would not have gone to sea if it had not been to get money for her. She had bewitched him. The lad cared nothing for money until he knew her. Latterly he had thought of nothing else but making Elmira a lady, buying her this and the other, talked of a yacht to sail with her into foreign ports, wondered if he would have money enough to buy a house in London. She admitted, of course, that David thought of her too, and often said his dear mother Sally

should have a fine house in Yarmouth market place, with as many servants as Mr. Petherick, and nothing to do ; and, as Miss Mumford put it, was generally off his head about money, and all because Elmira was a vain lass and wanted gewgaws and fine clothes, and to live above her station, and so on.

Autumn was passing into winter, and while Mildred and Sally were hungering for news of the *Morning Star*, and Sally was criticising Elmira's conduct, they had suddenly to face a wreck ashore that seemed almost as pitiable a one as if David's ship had gone down. Miss Mumford, in the first rush of feeling, exclaimed, "I knew it would come to ill ; our David has had a narrow escape ! " and then she wept to think of the blow it would be to Zaccheus Webb, the shock to David. Mildred had brought the news. She had been to Caister twice without being able to make anyone hear at the cottage, and on the third summons she had seen Mrs. Charity Dene—but it will be best to tell the story as it occurred ; it follows, in a natural sequence, the previous chapter, wherein Harry Barkstead gave Elmira David's message, and his own.

It was just before the first snow fell upon the Eastern coast, making the dunes all white and smooth ; it was as if nature had intervened to cover up the tell-tale treacherous footsteps that marked the flight of Elmira Webb ; for she had fled with Harry Barkstead, and no one knew whither.

Zaccheus Webb was away at sea, detained by heavy gales. He had put into a distant port ; and Sir Anthony Barkstead's son had made his latest conquest complete. Day after day he had lingered at the cottage, and had won over as a confederate in his suit of love Mrs. Charity Dene, who had sat complacently outside the parlor door to hear him play upon the spinet those old songs and quaint gavottes that were full of fascination under his pliant fingers. He had invited Charity to the finest wedding she would ever see,

and so on, getting possession of the foolish housekeeper's sympathy and good word; while Elmira drank in his pictures of the London world, saw herself as Lady Barkstead, and forgot her vows to David Keith, and even her duty to her doting father, as girls have often done before, and will to the end of time, under the spell of the seducer's honeyed words and right gallant promises.

But surely this pretty Elmira Webb was born to carry on the heritage of misery that rests with vanity and beauty! There is one thing in writing about women, in telling their stories, the theme is ever new. No two women are alike. Under certain given circumstances you can give a good guess at the conduct of the average man, but not of the average woman. They love, hate, fear, marry, or live single lives, but each with totally different impulses, feelings, and influences. You might think you knew Elmira Webb. Harry Barkstead was dead sure he knew her. Perhaps he did. Anyhow you and I would have thought her pride, her tact, and her common sense would have sought protection in a wedding ring before she became the traveling companion of Harry Barkstead, to say nothing of dishonoring the name and breaking the heart of her most kind, affectionate, and devoted father.

Elmira was born without the capacity to be constant. Some men have not the faculty of friendship. Harry Barkstead was a sensualist. He was led by his passions, Elmira Webb by her vanity. But not by that alone. She rejoiced in her beauty. In an Eastern slave market she would have encouraged the bidding. She had no conscience; that is as far as one can judge by her conduct. Yet she never vexed her father, was courteous, hospitable, delighted in pleasing everybody, and was quite a thrifty hand at housekeeping. What was wrong with her? who can tell? She liked David Keith, thought she loved him, while she laid her head on his knee in the *Swallow* that

night, when he told her he was going to Halifax ; but the shadow of Harry Barkstead falling across her vows, she rejoiced in the competition for her love, and thought of the uninterrupted flirtation she might have with Harry while David was away. A curious, contradictory, pretty, inconstant, merry, mischievous, provoking daughter of Eve, this belle of the Eastern coast.

Elmira, without indulging in any particular introspective reflections, did, in a way, argue with the situation.

David was so long away, and moreover Harry Barkstead was a gentleman ; and when his father died, as he could not fail to do in the course of nature, not many years hence, her lover—who had loved her all along from his first sight of her, so he said—would take possession of his estates and title, and she would be a lady. How every marriageable girl throughout the county and far away into Suffolk, and indeed even in London town itself, would be jealous of Lady Barkstead, and she would sweep past them in her brocaded silks and splash them with her chariot wheels.

It was true, she admitted to herself, that David loved her, but how many more might have said the same had she given them opportunity ? She shut her chamber door and lighted her candles, and though she shivered in the cold she studied her charms before her glass and tried on her daintiest things ; and more especially noted the flash of the diamond cross that Harry had given her.

It was a subtle thing to think of, by way of a gift, a holy cross set in stones that caught all the radiance of the sun and stars, and seemed, even to Elmira, to give her eyes an added radiance. Oh, she admired herself, this rustic beauty, the fisherman's daughter ! She could ape the fine lady in her very talk ; and she sang the song her father liked, and Mildred could only chide half-heartedly, " It Was Down in Cupid's Garden." David she was sure would make an exacting, jealous husband ; he had a masterful

manner, and he was over fond. Besides, what a hurry he was in to get her word when he knew he would be far away, as if he feared to trust her until he should return! And who knew that he ever would return? Harry had told her of their tiff, of David's boastful manner, of their walk to Yarmouth that night, and how David had triumphed over his gentleman friend, for while Harry would not deign to let the lad feel his inferior position, yet their stations were far apart, and old Petherick's clerk should not have forgotten that. Pride was a good thing when there was something behind it, a name or money or family; but who was David Keith? And what? With his common foster-mother, as she called herself, and his nameless parentage?

Harry did not say these things spitefully, but rather in sorrow, as one who had tried to be gracious, kind, and true to a lad whom he had liked for himself, apart from his common origin. When Elmira turned upon him and said her station was perhaps no better than David's, Harry said beauty was its own dower, its own name, its own rank and fortune. He mentioned lowly girls who had shared the crowns of kings. His illustrations of the summits to which beauty had climbed took no note of happy marriages where beauty and its consort walked hand in hand, and on Sundays sat together in the church; they were theatrical, the tales of humble women winning titles and wealth, and full of bright and merry progresses though foreign lands, the opera in Paris, the carnival of Venice, the festivals of Rome, and the routs and balls of London.

As Harry built up romance after romance for her feminine edification, Elmira saw herself with white shoulders and sweeping train, with hair that had been dressed by Parisian artists in the mode, and she felt around her neck threaded beads of pearls and diamonds. For a fisherman's daughter she had a rare fancy, and a lively imagination. Once she was launched in that bright, happy world of

wealth and show and music, of humble servitors and gilded coaches, she felt that her fortune was made. She had always known that she was never born for a humdrum wife such as David Keith would assuredly desire, with his psalm-singing housekeeper-foster-mother, and her praying, everlasting sighing little Hope at her elbow, to take the very life and soul out of every harmless jest.

Mrs. Charity Dene for one whole day and night had a call to a sick sister beyond Ormesby. Harry Barkstead filled her purse. She was very poor, and he was "such a gentleman!" Moreover, Elmira vowed she would not mind being left alone. "Indeed, dear Charity," she had said, "I shall like it very much. Mr. Barkstead will go home to the hall, of course, and even if he did not, what harm? I have assuredly given up all thoughts of David Keith, and Mr. Barkstead, as you say, is a gentleman."

Zaccheus' man of all work was on board the *Flying Scud.* Elmira was the gracious hostess of the cottage. How could she drive Harry Barkstead away. Did he not worship her? Then it was so strange and pleasant to be alone with your lover, secure from prying eyes, or the possibility of interfering comment. And Harry was so bright and merry, so natural, so handy, so handsome, so distinguished. He helped her to make the tea, and called it picnicking; he built up the winter fire, and called it fun. Elmira put on her best lilac gown, and brought out the old china service that had belonged to her grandmother.

It drove Harry wild to look upon her, so fresh and happy, with her baby-waisted gown, her dark blue ribbons, her rich brown hair, her white teeth, and her merry, tantalizing laugh. He had no thought for the past or the future. He seemed to live a century in these short hours. Elmira was the conquest of his rarest arts, the pretty victim to his lure and bow. How well he knew the coquettish ways of the game, the flitting to and fro, the hopping from

twig to twig, the twittering of song until the trap fell and the hunter had secured his prey.

"I have often taken a hand at housekeeping," he said.

"No, have you?" she replied, surrendering some trifling domestic article to be put away on shelves or in the shining corner cupboard.

"Oh, yes; I love picnicking, and with such a partner," he went on, deftly helping her to clear the table and make the hearth tidy. "Oh, if you could only have seen Jack Hinton and me in the Australian bush!"

"Have you been in Australia, then?" she asked.

"Rather; I should think I have," said Harry. "Jack Hinton and I lived in a hut away in Western Australia for over a month; made our own beds, cooked our own food, brushed up our own hearthstone; and Jack said I was the best housekeeper he ever came across. Poor old Jack! He is a peer of the realm now, and has given up fun and picnicking."

"Do you mean he is a lord?" said Elmira.

"Yes, a real live lord," said Harry.

"That's greater than a baronet, is it not?" she remarked, folding up the table cloth and putting it in the press.

"Yes, but there are rich lords and poor, my dear, just as there are rich baronets and poor ones, and unfortunately Lord Surbiton is poor. It's a miserable business to be poor, Elmira, isn't it?"

"I suppose it is," she said, "not that I have any knowledge of what it is; that is, what they call poor at Caister and Yarmouth."

"No, that is what I meant," said Harry, detecting the little glance of pride that Elmira turned upon him. "I mean compared with having servants and carriages and diamonds, and being able to do what you like and when you like; just as you will, my darling, when we drive about

the world together and show it what beauty is, and that there is another Ellen worth the siege of another Troy."

"Ellen!" said Elmira.

"She was a famous beauty in the years that are gone, hundreds of years ago, and the greatest and bravest men fought for her—just as I would fight all the world for you, Elmira."

Then they sat upon the old oak seat in the ingle nook and Harry told her far more wonderful stories than that of Ellen of Troy; for they were of current interest, belonged to the time and its ambitions, and they foreshadowed many and new delights for Elmira. He also spoke of their marriage. That would come all in good time. Not at present, he said, of course. There was no beating about the bush as to that. Harry was a bold wooer. He pressed his arm about the girl's waist as he went on, and she looked into the fire and listened. To marry at present would ruin him. She did not desire that, of course; love in a cottage was all very fine for fools, but they knew better than that. His father was a martinet, and had his views; but, happily, if the worst came to the worst, he could not cut him out of the Ormesby estate; that was his right. After all, that was only a very small tithe of his inheritance.

"Your father would think you lowered yourself, I suppose, by marrying me," said Elmira, with a flush of pride.

"He has great ideas about blood and pedigree, and that kind of thing."

"Well, so have I," said Elmira; "we come of an old stock, and——"

"My darling," said Harry, taking her into his arms, "you are lovely—beauty is blood; beauty is pedigree; beauty rules the world; you are fit for an empress; you are my empress, my own!"

Elmira struggled a little to free herself from Harry's

warm embrace, but, as I said before, he was a bold wooer and there were flickering shadows on the wall, and the fire was in gentle competition with the twilight, which should most, or least, illuminate the room.

"There, let me be now, dear," she said, straightening her rumpled hair; "you are really too bad."

"Forgive me, sweet," he said. "Why did selfish meddling fools make ceremonies and forms? I love you; you love me; is not that enough? You do love me, do you not?"

She was standing by the fire, leaning against an arm of the settee.

"Yes, I do, Harry, but——"

"'But' is the plague, the kill-joy of youth. I want you to trust me, Elmira. I swear to you by all that is good and true I will never leave you, never be unkind to you, give you all you can desire, never lose a chance, whatever it cost, to make you happy."

Then suddenly turning his face away, he said, "As I live, that sneaking little prison visitor has just opened the garden gate. Quick, fasten the door!"

He hurried her into the passage, the key was inside the door; he locked it and took out the key.

"There," he said in a whisper, "let her knock until her arms ache—there is no one at home."

He stole his arm about her and drew her gently aside in the shadow, where they could not be seen or heard; and the next moment there was a knock at the door, a quiet, inviting, apologetic kind of knock. It received no reply. Again Mildred tapped the door with the handle of her umbrella. Harry laughed quietly, and kissed his unresisting companion. The situation amused him. Perhaps Mildred had come with news of David. So much the better that she should not hear it. Rap-rap-rap on the door. Harry made it the signal to again embrace his pretty hostess.

She dared not push him aside for fear of making a noise. Once more Mildred rapped, and then all was silence. She had evidently gone away.

"It is unkind to let her go," whispered Elmira, "she has to walk all the way back to Yarmouth, and might have liked a cup of tea."

"Shall I go and call her?" he asked, pretending much alacrity to do so if she wished.

"No, no," said Elmira, detaining him.

"Ah, then you do love me!" he exclaimed. "My sweet, my Elmira!"

The twilight deepened into night.

The firelight reddened the walls of the old living room of Webb's cottage.

Elmira closed the shutters. Harry said there was no need to light the lamp.

Just above the shutters where the woodwork left a pane visible, a star shone through. The hum of the sea could be heard without.

It was a lovely, starlight night. Alan Keith, sighing to his son, said it was always to-morrow. But to-morrow does come to many. It comes to the bankrupt; it comes to the condemned criminal; it came to Elmira Webb; it had come before to Harry Barkstead; but this was Elmira's most memorable morrow, and it came in with a watery sun; it came with a sighing of the sea; it came with little shuddering winds across the dunes.

It was a cold morning, yet the sun was shining upon the cottage. It had been noticed by one or two passers-by, friends of the Webbs, that the shutters were not down at ten o'clock.

Soon after that hour, a man's hand cautiously pushed open the lattice of Elmira's window, and Harry Barkstead looked out. The hollyhocks by the garden seat were drooping, the nasturtiums were black with frost, shadows

were flitting over the sea, the clouds were darkening, the sunshine was fitful.

The blinds being drawn, the window was closed. The same cautious hand that opened the chamber lattice now undid the shutters of the house place and let in the daylight upon a fire that was still burning. Harry stirred it. He was in his shirtsleeves. He looked round for the kettle, went into the backyard, filled it, and hung it upon the bar over the fire. Very prosaic and common all this after the sunset, the twilight, the flickering shadows on the wall, the romances of the night before! Crime, villainy, deceit, prōfligacy, have all their mean, common sides.

Elmira now peered at the morning from her window, and saw the same scene that Harry had contemplated, but with different eyes and different thoughts. She began saying good-by to it; she knew she was looking upon it for the last time for many years, perhaps for ever. The sentiment touched her a moment, and she felt a pang of remorse when she thought of her father. She was very quiet; moved about the room with a sense of whispering. While she dressed she laid aside certain things of apparel for packing.

Harry had roughed it many a time on hunting expeditions, and he had lived under canvas, but he felt the vulgarity of this morning's picnic. He washed at the pump in the yard, made his toilet generally under miserable conditions, found himself actually tidying the room, pushing the gray ashes under the fire grate, and brushing some crumbs from the kitchen table. He had the heart to wish himself at Ormesby Hall or in his snug rooms in town. Then he wished he could recall yesterday, and was sorry for all that had happened, not for Elmira's sake, but as the profligate surfeits with possession.

Then he heard Elmira descending the stairs. He stepped aside, and went for his coat. When he returned she was feeding a robin that had perched upon the window sill.

She might have been the veriest saint, to look upon—and oh, the pity of it! There was an expression of melancholy in her dark blue eyes. Her brown hair was gathered up at the back of her small head. She wore a light print dress, with short sleeves, and belted in at the waist. A simple brooch fastened the dress at her neck. She was unusually pale, but her lips were red, and they seemed to pout with a half-grieved waywardness that was tenderly expressive, inviting sympathy.

Harry took both her hands in his and kissed her white forehead, with an incongruous air of respect and reverence.

"Good-morning," she said, "the robins are coming, it will soon be winter."

A few light particles of snow fell as she spoke.

"We will go where the sun shines always," said Harry, "and where the robins are nightingales."

"But first to London, you said?"

"Yes, dear, to London first."

Elmira began to move about the room and busy herself with her domestic work. Mrs. Charity Dene being out of the way, Harry saw Elmira in an entirely new light. She went about her work in a simple, graceful way, a little self-conscious, but as one who brought an artistic charm even into the commonplace business of preparing breakfast. Harry tried to help her, fetching and carrying in a useless way, and finally sitting in a corner of the ingle nook and admiring his little wife, as he called her, adding, "For you are, dear, just as surely as if we had pledged ourselves to each other in church or chapel." After breakfast they walked across the dunes, away from beaten tracks, and all day long the snow fell at intervals between bursts of sunshine. At sunset Harry Barkstead's man arrived with a light cart and carried away Elmira's trunks; and during the night, the snow hushing the tread of their horses' hoofs, Harry and Elmira posted to London.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE COUNTRY BEAUTY IN TOWN.

ELMIRA WEBB had not overestimated her personal attractions. Unsophisticated as she was in regard to London life, with no practice in coquetry except upon such gallants as came in her way down in Norfolk, she had nevertheless pictured herself the leader in some such set of London belles and beaux as Harry Barkstead had described to her. She expressed no surprise at the London streets, the gay equipages, the liveried servants, the wonderful shops, the aristocratic bearing of the West End crowds. Anyone might have thought she had been accustomed to such sights and such society all her life. She shopped and discussed millinery with the most fashionable modistes with perfect *sang-froid.*

On her first night at the opera she created a sensation among the set in which young Barkstead was a *persona grata.* Harry was both proud and jealous of the admiration she excited. Elmira was apparently innocent of the fact that she divided with the prima donna the attention of a large proportion of the boxes.

The town was quite taken with the new beauty, so fresh and young and striking. Elmira surveyed the house with well acted indifference, but her heart beat fast and furiously with a sense of triumph. The old house at Caister, and Zaccheus her father, were for the time being forgotten. She never once remembered David Keith. Harry Barkstead little thought what a handful of trouble he had undertaken in bringing the country beauty to London.

She received every visitor with a gracious ease and inter-

ested geniality that captivated both men and women. Her one object in life seemed to be to give pleasure to all who came within the range of her personal magnetism. Every man thought he had made a deep impression upon her; every woman confessed that the country girl was at any rate modest and unaffected. Lord Grennox was smitten to the very thing he called his heart. He was twice Barkstead's age, and had ten times his wealth. He was a married man, but his wife was very complaisant, and "received" in a very miscellaneous way.

Lord Grennox visited Elmira's box twice during the evening, and insisted upon Barkstead bringing mademoiselle to Beulah House, which Harry did on the very next day, not that he was anxious to do so, but Elmira would not let him rest until he had responded to his lordship's invitation. Lord Grennox was notorious for his amours. He was, nevertheless, a leader in the fashionable world, even a favorite at court. Lady Grennox was one of the most charitable women of her time, foremost in every benevolent work. Grennox himself was popular at White's and Boodle's, and he had been known to give a voluntary advantage to a bad loser, when play ran high at Crockford's. On the whole he was what men called a good fellow, and woman "a very dangerous man, my dear"; he knew as little about virtue, and cared less, than most men of his class in the fashionable world of his time; not that the age in which we live is overscrupulous in condoning social breaches of the moral laws that are supposed to govern society. As there was half a century ago, and before then, and as there will be no doubt in the centuries to come, there is a good deal of bowing to virtue and passing it by.

There were no half measures about the peccadilloes of Lord Grennox.

Before Elmira had been in town a month she had taken leave of Harry Barkstead and sailed away to those conti-

nental cities he had told her of, under the protection of Lord Grennox. Why should she consider Harry Barkstead? He had not married her, nor did he intend ever so to do. She had not bound her life to his in any way. He had no claim upon her. He had not honored her with his society for her pleasure but for his own. Lord Grennox had consented to settle upon her such an income for life as would make her independent of both his lordship and Harry Barkstead.

Elmira had accepted his lordship's proposal, and had obtained proper legal assistance to insure the deed of endowment being properly executed and with *bona fide* trustees. She was a woman of business, and in a very short time had met other women of business in town who had given her good advice, and men of business too, one of them having relations with Norfolk, and all of them possessed of a full knowledge of the immense wealth of Lord Grennox. She was a born adventuress, this Elmira of the East Coast—a Pompadour, a Delorme, a Castlemaine; she would have held her own in competition with the finest ladies of the Second Charles, as she held her own when Victoria was among the most delighted of the audiences at Covent Garden and Drury Lane.

Though dueling was beginning to decline even among army men as a mode of satisfying wounded honor, it was sufficiently the mode to justify Harry Barkstead in sending a friend full speed after Lord Grennox with the demand of an immediate meeting. Society, and certain journals that reflected the worst phases of its life and character, found the disappointment of Barkstead a matter for much gossip and amusement; and of course it was taken for granted that the young Norfolk gentleman would not sit down tamely under the injury which he had suffered at the hands of the gayest and cleverest Lothario of his time. Nor did Harry intend to do so; but meanwhile fate had other busi-

ness in store for the false friend who had matriculated for a reputation quite as scandalous as that of Lord Grennox.

Harry received a message from his father to go down immediately to Ormesby Hall on the pain of disinheritance and other punishments. So, while his ambassador of war sped on his way to France and Italy, Harry Barkstead took the coach to Yarmouth, a prey to the varied passions of pride, hate, unrequited love—he still called his passion for Elmira love—and fears of bankruptcy. He had of late not only far exceeded in his expenses the liberal allowance of his father, but he had contracted financial responsibilities that he could not meet without a special grant, and his bills had begun to accumulate in hands the least reputable among money-lenders. What he most feared however was Sir Anthony's anger over the affair of Elmira Webb. His father was rich enough to meet the financial claims that pressed upon him, and had rescued him from the accommodating Jews before ; but he had a personal regard for the smacksman of Caister, and might bitterly resent the seduction of old Webb's daughter. Harry's forecast of the agenda paper of his sins, which his father—Justice Barkstead, as the common people called him—had prepared against him was beside the mark.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"SIR, YOU ARE A BLACK-HEARTED SCOUNDREL!"

It was winter at Ormesby Hall when Harry Barkstead arrived. He had half a mind to call on Mrs. Longford-West before facing his father. A passing thought of the girl Jessie, however, deterred him. He did not know what might have happened at the Lodge since his interview with Mrs. Cooper. He had a sneaking feeling of regard for Mrs. Longford-West, badly as he had treated her, and felt no doubt that, when he had got through with his father, he would be able to obtain the widow's forgiveness for his latest freak. He called it a freak now, his running off with David's sweetheart; counting in his reckless way the heart-break of Zaccheus as nothing more than the misery he had brought upon David his friend. As for his father—well, Sir Anthony had been a young man once, and that must be his answer; at all events he had not disgraced the name of Barkstead by marrying some loose woman; he had made no *mésalliance*, his name was still clear from social disgrace. He was seriously in debt, and had raised money at a ruinous interest, but every young fellow of means, pretensions, and prospects had done that.

"I am glad you saw the propriety of an immediate response to my summons," said Sir Anthony, on receiving Harry in the library at Ormesby Hall.

Sir Anthony spoke with his judicial manner. He looked upon his son for the time being as a culprit. Sir Anthony had dressed himself for the occasion. He wore his tightest brown coat, his most severe stock, and his bunch of seals

rattled on his thigh as he stood before the blazing fire and contemplated his handsome but dissipated son.

They were in strong contrast, the two men.

Harry was pale, his eyes sunken, his manner nervous. He had suffered mentally of late as well as physically.

His father was short in stature, thin, wiry, his complexion brown and a trifle ruddy, his hair iron-gray, his manner alert though firm, and his resolutions, whatever they were, fixed.

Harry gave back to him his defiant gaze, but Sir Anthony's eye was the more steadfast of the two. He spoke in a hard, set way.

"Harry Barkstead," he said, "you are on the road to perdition; you have resisted every check that good advice and parental affection have offered to you."

"I am sorry, sir, to have so gravely offended you," said Harry.

"It is a hard thing to say, but it is as just as it is true. Your ill conduct shortened the days of your mother."

"Yes, that is a hard thing to say," Harry replied.

"But it is a harder thing to have justified it. You have since then made a convenience of my affection. You have used me. You have disregarded my views for you; you have made light of my opinions; you have looked upon me as you might upon some cheap money-lender; and when you could trade upon my weakness no longer without a truce, you have come down here and pretended a filial duty you have never felt and submitted to a companionship you have not cared for."

"My dear father, you wrong me. I am a bad lot, no doubt, but I have always had a deep and intense regard for you, and a true respect and gratitude for your kindness."

"There was a time when words such as those would have weighed with me; they do so no longer; words are

all very well, but deeds are the test of affection; they are the tokens of filial love—deeds, my son, deeds! And what are your deeds? There are profligates and profligates, spendthrifts and spendthrifts. In your profligacy I find no redeeming feature; you are a common seducer and a liar!"

"Father!" exclaimed the son, pale with suppressed emotion.

"You have practiced your villainies with a systematic guile, and with a vicious disregard of every manly sentiment."

"By Heavens, Sir Anthony, I cannot listen to such language even from you!" said Harry.

"But by Heaven you shall listen!" said Sir Anthony. "What sort of language did you use to entice Jessie Barnes from honor, peace, and happiness? Or were you content with mere promise and flattery? I am told that these were not alone the artifices you used against that poor orphaned and sweet child. Sir, you are a black-hearted scoundrel! And by the Heaven you have the audacity to appeal to, you shall make restitution!"

While Harry winced at the strength of his father's invective he felt a certain amount of relief in the fact that the storm was likely to break upon the unimportant head of Jessie Barnes. It was evident that his father had as yet heard nothing of the affair of Elmira Webb. Nor had he; for truth to tell, no one cared to mention it to him. Most people in Yarmouth, and all about Caister, knew of it. Mrs. Longford-West had heard of it; but Sir Anthony was perfectly ignorant of what had taken place. It was nobody's business in particular to tell him; and nobody had ventured to do so; even Zaccheus Webb had held his peace; to him the shock of his girl's base ingratitude had come with a dull thud that had left him more or less stupefied. He had gone about his work with a lack-luster eye, had returned the "good-days" of his friends and acquaint-

ances with a nod and a melancholy smile, but had said nothing, except to Mrs. Charity Dene; and to her only a few words which he repeated with little or no variation—"She'll come hum, Mira will; but where's Mas'r David Keith!"

"What restitution?" asked Harry.

"Jessie Barnes," went on Sir Anthony, without heeding him, "was the daughter of a soldier who died for his country in the first American war; though only a private he came of a good family; his enlistment was a piece of folly—but it was honorable folly, not vicious profligacy, and he left a widow and one child; the widow was your mother's care until the poor woman's death; the child was brought up by her aunt Mrs. Cooper at Ormesby, where I gave her a cottage; two years ago Mrs. Cooper let her cottage and went to live at Filby Lodge, Jessie having grown into a pretty, gentle, and lovable girl. Yesterday a child was born at the Lodge—you have done me the honor to make me a grandfather. You will add to that the further honor of giving me an honest woman for my daughter-in-law."

"I don't understand you," said Harry.

"You will marry this girl, and settle down here at Ormesby as an honest gentleman."

"And be the laughing-stock of the whole country! Why you might as well marry your cook."

"By the Lord, sir, and had I behaved to my cook as you have to this girl, I would marry her, sir. And you shall marry the mother of your child, or you are no longer a son of mine."

"My dear father," said Harry, "that sort of speech might do very well for an affiliation case at the sessions, but it won't do for me."

"Won't it, indeed! And in what respect are you different from the men who come before me as a magistrate in

affiliation cases? They are brutes of the field, ignorant, lustful, poor, uninformed wretches, with no control of their passions, no sense of the proprieties of life. Your crime against this girl—coming of quite as honorable a family as your own—remember that—I say your crime is infinitely worse than theirs ; but fortunately your position enables you to condone it, to bring light out of the darkness, to make honorable restitution ; and we will set an example to these poor people ; we will show them that we do not preach one thing and act another ; we will——"

"Oh, look here, sir," exclaimed Harry, seeing at a glance the effect of this humble conclusion to his career, and having no feeling whatever for Jessie or her child, "look here, sir ; this thing is impossible ! I am ready to confess that my conduct has been wicked, and I am truly sorry that you have not a worthier son ; but marry the lodge-keeper's niece—my dear sir, that is simply nonsense ! "

"Indeed !" said Sir Anthony, "she is beneath your station, eh ? If I consider her equal to mine, I flatter myself that my record is an honorable one, and I might be forgiven if I felt proud of it. But yours ! Why, you are not even honorable in your money affairs, let alone what you call affairs of the heart."

"Oh, curse it all, sir, I have heard enough ; I am in no mood to be preached at as if I was a culprit about to be sentenced to be hanged ; I know what I have done ; I have said I am sorry ; and I am sorry ; but I am not going to let my father in his dotage make a damn fool of me ! "

"Oh, I am in my dotage, eh ?" said Sir Anthony. "Because I chalk out an honorable course for you, because I am ready to forgive you on fair human conditions, because a poor girl is to be given the rank and position she has a right to at your hands, because I have the audacity to tell the son who has broken his mother's heart that he shall not drag his father's name in the gutter without pro-

test, I am in my dotage! We shall see! Do you deny the charge made against you at Filby Lodge?"

"I deny nothing; I say I am sorry."

"Do you deny the paternity of Jessie Barnes' child?"

"No, and I say I am sorry."

"I will not remind you how you brought about the girl's ruin, it is a wicked story; and I repeat that there is only one way for you, and that is to make the restitution I desire, and which no honorable gentleman at the intercession of his father would resist."

"And I say that I will not do it," Harry exclaimed, with angry defiance.

"And I say you shall," was the quick reply.

"And I say——"

"Don't dare to speak again!" said Sir Anthony, stepping toward him.

"I will not be bullied, and I will not be bounced," said Harry, beginning to pace the room.

"I neither desire to bounce you nor to bully you," said Sir Anthony, stepping back to his former position by the fire and standing stiffly; "I will give you time to consider, say until to-morrow."

"I require no time to consider," said Harry; "if I have not my dead mother's tenderness, at least I have her pride, and, by ——, I will not marry into the families of the Coopers and the Barneses."

"Then you leave this house, now and forever; I disown you. You are no longer my son. Go, sir!"

"Very well," said Harry, striding out of the room, and leaving his father still standing firmly on the spot where he had delivered the uncompromising sentence.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A WRECK ASHORE.

JUST about the time when Harry Barkstead was entering the library at Ormesby Hall to meet his father, the London coach drew up at the posting house in Yarmouth.

The two most unexpected passengers were David Keith and his father. They were unexpected at Hartley's Row for the reason that news of the loss of the *Morning Star* had the day before reached Mr. Petherick, and he had conveyed the information to Miss Mumford, who had ever since been in a state bordering on despair. Mr. Petherick had reason to believe that a boat might have been launched with men who had been since picked up, David with them. Mildred Hope, in the spirit of her name, undertook to cling hard and fast to that possible boat. She told Sally that something in her heart whispered faith in this belief. Mildred, by prayer and precept, did all she could to encourage David's best friend to think of the boy as still alive. But Sally remembered that she did not wish David to go; that he only went to get money for that strumpet Mira Webb, and so on; and nothing would comfort her; she knew her dear lad was gone, he was too good for this world, and so on.

It happened that the coach on this occasion had few passengers, Alan Keith and David alighted, the former without being known. David was not expected; but he unwrapped himself and made himself known to the landlord and engaged a porter to see after his luggage. He did not stay to introduce his father, who was enveloped in furs and comforters—a long, tall, strange-looking person,

with gray straggling hair and bright eyes sunk deep in dark sockets.

"We will just have a little brandy, father, and then I will show you the way to Hartley's Row, while I run over to Caister and fetch Elmira; it would never do, you know, if I did not go there first."

"I suppose not," said Alan, following him into the great glass bar, flashing with bottles, decanters, and plate, a blazing fire enveloping them in its genial glow.

"Two brandies hot," said David, "and have you a gig?"

"Oh, yes," said the landlord, who had followed them into the bar.

"Will you put a horse into it? I want to drive over to Caister."

By the time they had drunk their brandy the gig was at the door.

"Excuse me a minute," said David. "Come this way, father;" and he took the old man's arm, and led him by a back way to Hartley's Row. "You see the house in the corner?"

"Yes," said Alan.

"That's Sally's house; the one next is where Mildred Hope lives. Tell them I have gone to Caister to fetch Elmira. Sure you'll be all right?"

"Reight," said Alan; "eh, lad, I'll be reight enough, if I dinna scare Sally oot o' her seven senses."

David watched Alan enter the dear familiar house in the corner of the Row, and then darted back to the inn and jumped into the gig, which he drove with a beating and a joyous heart to Caister.

The wind was blowing with a shrewd, chill air across the dunes. Here and there lay the remains of a heavy snow that had for weeks been thick on the ground. The stunted and draggled reeds in the dykes shivered by the half frozen water. But David felt his cheeks glow with warmth

and delight. Everything was forgotten at the moment but the bliss in store for him. The happy days of his courtship seemed to pass before him in a sunny procession, notwithstanding the wind and the shivering reeds, notwithstanding the gray of the ocean and the white patches of frozen snow. His shipwreck and even his escape, the meeting with his father, his auspicious hours in Venice ; he only recollected any of them for the sake of telling his story to Elmira.

When he reached the cottage he tied his horse to the garden gate, and pushed his way to the front door. It was unlatched, and in he went.

"Hello," he shouted, "dear old Zacky, there you are!"

"Aye, there I be, that's so," said old Webb, who was sitting by the fire in the house place, and doing nothing to all appearance but sitting there ; he was not warming himself; he was not smoking.

"Are you not glad to see me?" said David, a trifle damped. "Why, what's the matter, where's your hand?"

"There he be, Master Keith, I knawed yo'd come."

The smacksman took David's hand in a listless way, and looked up at him with a pair of sad, melancholy eyes.

"What's wrong?" said David. "Where's Elmira?"

"She'll cum hum, mak no doubt."

"Come home—why, where is she?"

"That's what I kep a-sayin'." He reached out for David's hand. "I knawed yo'd come—sea do spare some on us ; spared me all these years."

Then he resumed his former listless manner, and looked into the fire.

David felt his heart sink as it had sunk when he knew that the *Morning Star* was about to founder. He looked round the room and noticed that it had lost its former bright and cheerful appearance. The hearth had not been swept up. The windows were not shining. The curtains

were draggled. On the dresser were left the remains of the breakfast things. The flowerpots on the window sill were dirty and the plants in them were withered.

"Zaccheus," said David, almost in a whisper, "what has happened? Where is Elmira?"

"She mought come hum to-day, and she mought stop till Sunday, it be hard to say; I reckon we mun wait."

"Is there anybody else here but you?"

"We'n had some winter, and fishin's been mortal bad, but we mun't complain; we'n be ole reight agen when Mira comes home."

"My God!" exclaimed David, trembling with suspense and fear; "where is she? What has happened? Listen, Webb, wake up; what's the matter with you? Wake up!"

David slapped the old man on the shoulder. He might as well have struck a post. The smacksman turned and looked at David, and smiled with such unutterable sadness that tears welled up into David's eyes, and he staggered to a seat.

"Ah, it's a mortal grief," said Zaccheus, seeming to realize for the first time David's anxiety; "a mortal grief, better yo'd deed."

"S-s-sh! What is the grief?" David asked, sobbing as he spoke. "Tell me, Zacky. Is she dead, Elmira, our Elmira? Oh, my God, I shall go mad!"

The old man watched the distracted lad go to the window and look out as if he were looking for a grave. Then he returned to where the old man sat, and dragged a seat by his side.

"Zacky, dear old fellow, something awful has occurred; what is it, where is Elmira?"

The old man laid his hand upon David's arm, and then suddenly rose up with a cry and tramped about the room in his great boots, making the place shake.

"Tell me," said David, following him; "tell me!"

But Zaccheus simply sat down again and sighed, and laid his hand once more upon David's arm.

"Is there no one in the house?" David asked in a loud voice, and going to the staircase to repeat the question, when he heard someone moving above, and his heart beat wildly, but it was only Charity Dene, who came down the stairs.

"Oh, Lord! good gracious me!" she exclaimed. "Well, I never! And they said yesterday in Yarmouth you were drowned. Well, well!"

"What is the matter here?" David asked.

"With the master? This is his queer day, he's regular daft a Saturdays, it was a Saturday when he come hum and found as she'd gone."

"Who'd gone?" asked David, as well as he could, with a dry tongue, that clove to the roof of his mouth.

"Why, Elmira, of course," said Charity Dene.

"Gone? Where?" asked David.

"Why, gracious me! Don't you know all about it? Should ha thowt everybody know'd by now."

"But you see I have only just returned," said David, trembling as if he had been struck with a palsy.

"Why, of course, what a fool I be for sure. She'n been gone more'n a month, six weeks, I dessay. Went off wi' young Barkstead to London."

"Woman, what do you mean?" said David, staggering to the stairway, and gripping the doorpost.

"What do I mean? Why, eloped, I suppose; they took their luggage and went by coach."

"Married?" David asked presently.

"Lor, not as I knows on," said Charity Dene. "But there, I mun get master his tea; will yo' stay and ha' some wi' him? It 'ud be a comfort to him. He is that lonely, nobody takin' no notice on him except Miss Mildred Hope, as looks in once in a blue moon to sit wi' him, and once

or twice have tea; but you looks very white; aint yo' well?"

"Not very," said David, pushing past her and into the garden. "Let me think!" he said, "Lord have mercy upon me!"

He sat in the seat beneath the figurehead of the wrecked East Indiaman, his hand upon his heart as if to keep it in its place. For a minute or two he felt as if he were suffocating. Suddenly he rose up, and walked out upon the dunes and down by the sea. After awhile he felt better and returned to the house.

"Did she go of her own free will?" David asked, the woman answering him while she was cutting bread and butter, the tea things being already laid.

"Oh, yes!"

"Did he visit her here for some time first?"

"Constant; he was allers a-hanging about after her."

"Did Zaccheus know!"

"Well, he were a-fishin' most of the time, and when they went off together yo' see he'd been caught in gales and 'ad to put into somewheres or other, and was delayed, and young Squire Barkstead he were a bould wooer, that he were!"

"Oh, curse you!" exclaimed David. "Damn you!"

"Well, I'm sure!" said Mrs. Dene. "Yo'd better mend yore manners, young man, I'm thinking."

She turned about to fling this remark at her questioner, but he was gone.

CHAPTER XL.

A SURPRISE FOR HARTLEY'S ROW.

"BEG pardon! are you Miss Mildred Hope?" asked a tall strange man, encumbered with a fur coat and cap and speaking with a curious Scotch accent.

Alan Keith, as he entered the bright particular corner where Sally's green shutters, white blinds, and brass knocker gave distinction to Hartley's Row, came upon Mildred shutting her own door, and evidently about to walk over to Sally's.

He had heard so much of both women and the locality of their two dwellings that he could not have mistaken the trim, dainty little figure of the prison visitor.

"Yes," she said, "that is my name."

"We're weel met," said the stranger, "I have news o' your freend David Keith."

"Oh, have you?" was the quick reply, in which there was a mixture of hope and apprehension. "Is it good news?"

"Aye, I'm glad to say it is."

"Thank God!" Mildred exclaimed with fervor.

"Ye had ill tidings, I'm thinking?"

"Yes; oh, yes. The news came yesterday."

"What news?"

"The loss of the *Morning Star*."

"Weel, that's true enough; but our David was saved."

"You don't know what a blessed messenger you are!" said Mildred.

"Yet I dinna undervalue the tidings I bring. I suppose ye're thinkin' o' Miss Mumford—Sally—eh?"

"Yes," said Mildred, "but who are you, sir, may I ask?"

"I'm telt ye're a God-fearin' little woman, a releegious lassie, one as can stand firm in joy or sorrow?"

"I am a humble servant of Christ," said Mildred, "but only a poor creature."

"I am Alan Keith," said the stranger, "David's father."

"You are proclaiming miracles!" exclaimed Mildred, starting back a pace or two.

"Weel, I dinna ken but you're reight! And it seems to me it's just providential that I met you i' this promiscuous way, for the reason that I want you jest to go into that hoose wi' the brass knocker, and acquaint Sally Mumford wi' the fact that not only is David alive, was lost and is found, but that his fether is alsae in the land o' the livin', and when she's in a condition to see me I'll step in and assure her o' my reality."

"Yes, yes—oh, you are very thoughtful!—and David, where is he?"

"He isna far away," said Alan, with a most grim kind of wink that was intended to be humorous, "there was jest a person he had to see oot yander; but he'll nae be lang—and noo, Miss Hope, gae and prepare the way for me and my gude tidings."

"I am rather bewildered," said Mildred.

"You're a bonnie lassie!" said Alan. "For a preachin' lassie you're just a marvel o' sweet looks, and a'most sweeter voice. Besides it's vera cold; gae in, lassie, and when Sally's equal to seein' guests and the like, come ye to the door."

Alan stood in the little court for some time, noting its clean red bricks, its raddled pots filled with greenery notwithstanding the nipping frosts of winter. Stray beams of sunshine glinted in upon him. Then the wind would rush round an adjacent corner and ruffle the gray fur of his coat collar, as if it had some business of identification on hand, and was going to carry the strange news out to sea.

Presently Mildred, in a soft, warm, dove-colored dress came to the door, and Alan followed her into the house.

A pinched red-eyed old lady met him almost on the door-step, and then recoiled as he put out his hand.

"Heaven support me!" she exclaimed, "how you must have suffered!"

"And ye luke as if ye'd nae had sae vera gude a time on it," was Alan's calm reply.

"Oh, dear, dear, your poor gray hair, and your hollow cheeks! Oh, my dear, kind, abused master!" Sally went on, kissing his hands and weeping over them.

"My dear Sally, ye were once as buxom and fresh as a rose! but there, I canna tell ye hoo glad I am to see ye!"

"Dear master! my poor, kind, brave master!" went on Sally, "and you've seen David your son! Merciful God, how mysterious are thy ways!"

"Aye!" said Alan. "Come noo, sit ye down, Sally, my lass, and I'll just tek off these owerpowering wraps that David would load me wi', for fear I'd be takkin cauld, the dear thoughtful lad that he is!"

"I will return by and by," said Mildred, who felt herself in the way, and was anxious to leave Sally and her old master to unburden their memories to each other in private.

"No, my love, dont thee go. Eh, my dear master, ye don't know what a comfort she's been to me."

"Oh, yes, I do; David telt me all aboot Miss Hope," said Alan, removing his wraps and standing forth in the quaint Oriental garb that he had worn in Venice. He looked ten years younger, now that his figure was more or less free from incumbrance; the same hatchet face, the same strong well-shaped nose, the deep sunken eyes, the masterful if gentle expression that had attracted the artistic Venetians when first they saw him. Mildred felt awed in his presence; he was different from any other man she had

seen; he seemed in her untutored imagination like a prophet out of the Bible.

Sally could only sit down and stare at him, and sigh and wonder, until her first surprise and amazement over she asked for David.

The same grim effort at optical humor that had startled Mildred was Alan's response.

"But where is he?" asked Sally. "Did he come with you?"

"Aye, he did. We came by the coach frae London."

"Yes?" said Sally, "and then?"

"Why, he bade me come on here and prepare the way for him while he went on a little business of his ain."

The same wink, with the same ludicrous results.

Then it suddenly dawned upon Mildred that David had gone to Caister. She glanced at Sally, who read her thought and started to her feet.

"Dear master, don't say he has gone to Caister!"

"There's a person named Webb lives at Caister, eh?" was Alan's response, but this time the wink was checked halfway by an expression of terror that distorted the face of Sally Mumford, which had already been worn into a permanent expression of pain and sorrow.

"Oh, where did he say he was going?" asked Sally.

"To see his sweetheart and bring her to complete our family party," said Alan.

"Oh, dear, dear!" exclaimed Sally, bursting into tears and hiding her head in her apron.

"Why, there's something wrang!" said Alan, looking from Sally to Mildred, who had turned pale, but stood as stiffly as a statue, gazing at Alan.

"Yes," she said, her lips trembling.

"What is it?"

"Elmira is no longer worthy of David," said Mildred.

"How? Why?"

"She has forgotten him and herself," said Mildred.

"Nae, dinna beat aboot the bush; I had begun to thenk he was too happy—that I was too happy!" said the old man with a sigh, and stooping, as he spoke, like a man in the attitude of bending his back to a blow.

"She has gone away with a young man called Harry Barkstead."

"Good God! he was David's best friend!"

"David thought so," said Mildred.

"She has left her father and her home, and is living with David's friend?" asked Alan, turning his deep-set eyes upon Mildred.

Mildred simply said, "Alas!" and looked upon the ground.

Alan thrust his long fingers through his thin wisps of hair, dragged a chair toward the ingle nook, sat down and looked into the fire almost in a similar attitude to that in which Zaccheus Webb was sitting when David found him.

"Disgraced hersel' as weel as been untrue to David; is that what ye say?" he asked, staring at the crackling wood and coal.

"I fear so. Led away by a designing and wicked man," said Mildred.

"His friend!" said Alan; "his friend! It will hurt David. Please God it be nae a mortal hurt. His mother was an angel—is an angel. I lost her—death took her. Poor David! this Elmira Webb was his heart and soul—his life and hope and ambition; and he's lost her—he has lost her, and there's a loss that's worse than death! What'll he do? If they meet, there is only one thing he can do! His mither owed her death to villainy and persecution; they jest broke her heart; but I smote them hip and thigh—aye, by God, I did!"

"Sir!" said Mildred, facing Alan as he rose up and began to put on his cloak, "David is a man of peace!"

"Is he? Let me tell ye, then, that David's a man o' war! A life for a life. Will ye deny him a righteous vengeance?"

"'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord; I will repay,'" answered Mildred, and Sally, taking Alan's hand, leaned her head upon his arm and continued to weep and sob.

"Forgie me! I amna used to be amang women; I'm just bragging like some waster, besides forgettin' a' the misery that belongs to what's ca'd takkin the law into one's ain hands; but ye hae telt me the saddest news I hae heard for more'n twenty year! It sets my auld heart beatin' like a blacksmith's hammer; I maun gae into the air. Moreover, I maun find him. How will I get to Caister? He hired him a gig."

"I will show you," said Mildred. "May I go with you?"

"If ye'll gae noo."

"I will," said Mildred, tying her bonnet under her chin, and wrapping her thick gray cloak about her.

"I cannot be left; I mun't be left here," said Sally; "tak me wi' ye! But for David's sake you shouldn't be sorry about Elmira Webb; she were a bad lot at heart; I nivver liked her!"

"Eh, but David worshiped her," said Alan.

"Take me to David," said Sally; "I must go!"

Mildred ran upstairs for Sally's shawl, and a great muff that David had bought her, and a boa for her neck, and they went forth, as the wintry sun was blown out by a northwest wind that was beating up into a gale.

CHAPTER XLI.

DAVID KEITH AND HARRY BARKSTEAD MEET AGAIN.

THERE was snow in the gale.

The first feathery messengers were flying about in the air. Across the sea the vanguard of the wintry storm was marching.

Neither David nor his friends heeded the cold. Nor did Harry Barkstead, who was riding into Yarmouth from Ormesby Hall, pondering his plans and cursing his fate. He rode the same mare that had borne him proudly along to Caister on that bright autumn day when he galloped to his conquest of old Webb's daughter; but the steed did not know her master on this occasion. He rode her with the reins lying loosely upon her neck. She shambled along in a lazy, leisurely fashion that was very much out of keeping with her customary gait, and also quite out of harmony with the day, not to say utterly uncharacteristic of the rider.

The stubbles, where the gunners had tramped after their game and made blue wreaths of smoke above the browning hedges, were now flecked with weeds and dotted here and there with snow. The trees were bare. The roads were hard with frost. The toll-house doors were close shut. The sun made feeble efforts against the gray clouds, and the northern wind was driving them up from the sea attended by light flakes of snow, that went about in a weird dance, some of them rushing into Harry's face without even making him wince or without giving him the satisfaction that snow might have brought to a feverish brow.

Harry's thoughts were not retrospective.

His motto was that the past was done with ; the future had to be taken care of.

What was he going to do ? Should he go back to London at once ? Or should he stay at the Norfolk in the hope that his father might relent and send for him ? That was rather a forlorn hope at present, he confessed, seeing that his father had not yet heard of his latest escapade, had evidently not seen old Webb, or been told the story of Elmira's departure from Caister, let alone her trip to the Continent with Lord Grennox. Of course now that the flood-gates of gossip would be opened against him, Sir Anthony would at once be made acquainted with the story of Elmira Webb.

Anyhow, Mr. Barkstead came to the conclusion that he would stay for the night at the Norfolk ; and having got this tiny distance on the highway of the future, he touched the horse with his spurs, took up the reins, and cantered into Yarmouth, not taking his customary road whence he could see old Webb's cottage, but going by a more roundabout route, that took him into Yarmouth from a different point.

While Harry Barkstead, fresh from his father's denunciations, was riding toward the Norfolk, David Keith, in a far more energetic mood, was driving in a similar direction.

As David had swept along the highway among the sand-dunes to Caister he had fairly laughed for joy. He had almost been unable to contain himself, while anticipating his meeting with Elmira and the blundering congratulations of Zaccheus. He had even thought of the delight it would be to Charity Dene to see him once more in the old house, this time with his arm rightfully about Elmira's waist.

Then he had thought of how she would get into the gig and sit by his side, and how they would drive triumphantly into Yarmouth, and he would watch the expression of his

father's face when, introducing the beautiful girl, he said to the old man, "This is Elmira."

There was surely never a happier fellow than David on his way to Caister, never a more wretched one as he drove back again to Yarmouth. Now he groaned in his desolation, bit his lips with vows of vengeance, cursed Harry Barkstead beneath his breath as he hissed his anathemas, but found no word or thought of rebuke for Elmira. Of course the scoundrel had followed her about and pestered her with his attentions, loaded her with presents, made love to her at every opportunity, taken advantage of her when her father was away and when, no doubt, she thought he (David) was drowned! He made every excuse for Elmira. He saw in Harry the blackest hearted villain that mind could conceive or imagination invent.

The light in David's eye was murderous, his lips drawn over his strong teeth, his face livid. The snow wetted his cheeks as it wetted Harry Barkstead's, and with as little feeling or notice as it drew from him. The wind howled across the dunes. Now and then a streak of sand, like a winter wraith, fled across the way, and a flight of gulls from the sea cried out against the coming storm. The licensed victualler's horse galloped along the hard road as if the fiend was behind it, though David neither touched it with whip nor urged it with rein.

Was it something in the fixed destinies of David Keith and Harry Barkstead that allotted to their horses the very pace at which they should travel that the two men might meet as they did? Coincidences are supposed to be the chief motives of a fictitious story, but they are far more remarkable in the history of real life than anything the novelist can invent. There was nothing in the least unlikely or improbable in these two young fellows crossing each other at this momentous period of their two young lives.

While Alan and the two women of Hartley's Row were making inquiries and procuring a carriage at the posting house, David was speeding along the North Road and so into the market-place ; and as he entered it at one end, Harry Barkstead rode in at the other. The snow by this time was beginning to fall with a persistence that was only held in check by the wind.

It was not strange that Harry did not notice David whom he had come to regard as dead, whenever he gave him a thought. The moment David saw the unmistakable figure of his whilom friend, he pulled up his horse and leaped to the ground.

" Here, my lad," he said to a fellow who was standing beneath an adjacent archway, " take this horse."

" Yes, sir," said the man, stepping to the horse's head.

" Take the trap to the posting house and say I'll be there directly."

" Yes, sir," said the man, holding out his hand for the shilling that David drew from his pocket.

Pleased with the bright new coin, and proud of sitting behind any kind of a horse, the man rattled away across the stones toward the house by the quay, and David walked with a steady, firm step to the Norfolk, where Harry was alighting from his horse, the Norfolk groom leading it in beneath the archway where there was a private entrance to the bar.

Suddenly Harry was pulled up by a hand that took him by the shoulder and turned him round. Recognizing that the grip was not a friendly one he raised his lead-loaded riding stock, and found himself in a threatening attitude face to face with David Keith.

" Oh, it's you, is it ? " he said, with a surprised look and stepping back a pace or two.

" Yes, who did you think it might be ? " David asked, getting between Harry and the bar door.

"It might have been a Bow Street runner, who had mistaken me for some other villain," said Harry, rearranging the collar of his coat.

"I'm glad you confess yourself a villain," said David, "it will save time and explanations."

"Will it?" said Harry, backing still further into the yard under the influence of David's aggressive attitude.

"Where is Elmira Webb?" asked David, steadying himself, for it was an effort to mention her name.

"I don't know," was the answer, flung back at David with something of the defiant and threatening manner in which the question was put.

"You lie!" said David.

Harry tried hard to stand firmly on the defensive and to give David back retort for retort, but the weakness of his cause hampered him. The knowledge of his infamous conduct *qua* this honest, trusting lad unnerved him.

"I ask you again, where is she?"

"I repeat I do not know."

"And I say again you are a liar and a coward," said David, his rising passion tinging his pale cheeks.

Harry merely shrugged his shoulders, but he turned his whip-stock round and held it handle downward.

"Do you remember how we parted, you and I?" David asked, his lip trembling.

"Yes, I remember, and to that memory you owe it that I have not laid you flat with this whip; I tell you now I am no more a liar than you are, and you can easily find out if I am a coward!"

"All in good time," said David. "You knew that when we parted she was engaged to be my wife."

"I don't deny it."

"And you professed to be my friend?"

"I did, and felt like it at the time."

"Really!" said David, his lips paling with the scorn they expressed, "really!"

"It is the truth," said Harry.

"You knew that I risked that journey chiefly for her happiness; you knew that it consoled me to think she would have a friend at hand if she wanted one—a friend whom I could trust; the friend who went all the way to Bristol with me to say good-by, and take my last message back to her and the others whom I loved!"

David seemed as if he would break down under the influence of his more tender feelings; his eyes filled with tears, and Harry thought the moment opportune to offer explanations.

"She is not worthy of you," he said.

"Who was her tutor?" David asked, dashing the tears from his face. "Who in the absence of her only protector, her honest old father, stole her away from home and honor?"

"Not I," said Harry, now advancing toward David. "I'm tired of these useless recriminations, and it is cold standing out here; besides, people in the bar are becoming interested, and it is a pity you should make an exhibition of yourself."

"Answer me! Do you think I care who hears what I have to say?"

"Who stole her away?" said Harry, repeating David's question with a sneer, and stiffening his lip at the remembrance of his own grievance against the girl. "Stole her away! Why, she was any man's goods who had money enough!"

David for a moment was stunned with Barkstead's bitter and cowardly reply of justification. Vilifying the girl he had deceived to the friend whom he had wronged was the climax of outraged friendship and honor.

"Coward!" hissed David, approaching him, as if about to spring upon him, "liar! thief! blackguard!"

"Out of my way, you fool!" exclaimed Harry, clutching his loaded whip as he found David once more blocking his way to the bar door and with a new light of danger in the lad's eyes. Harry both boxed and fenced, and he watched David's movements with the practiced skill of one who knew how to take advantage of the smallest mistake arising from passion or lack of art.

At the moment that David reached out his long arm with the intention of seizing Harry by the throat, his adversary, evading his touch, struck him a tremendous blow with the handle of his whip.

David fell back against the door, half blinded with a rush of blood from a wound on the forehead. Perhaps the bleeding was a relief. An open wound at the outset was better for David than a heavy bruise.

Barkstead, his passion now hot, and his false pride awakened, advanced upon David to remove him.

"Out of my way, I tell you!" he said, and the sound of his voice was like a trumpet to the half stunned faculties of his antagonist.

Crouching like a tiger and with a wild cry, David sprang at his enemy, hitting him full in the face, and catching with his left hand the whip-stock that Harry had once more raised against him.

There was a sharp, fierce struggle, a desperate effort of each to fling the other, and from which David emerged with Harry's bludgeon-like weapon in his right hand. As his foe gathered himself up, David swung the whip-stock above his head and struck his enemy across the face, and followed up the blow with another and another.

Sir Anthony's wretched son fell upon his face. Losing all control over himself, David rushed upon him and kicked the resistless body before the people in the bar, who knew the nature of the quarrel, had thought it right to interfere. It took half a dozen men to hold the lad, who was the

picture of wild despair and madness, the blood streaming down his face, his clothes torn, his lips wet with blood and foam, his hands clutching the empty air, but gradually becoming limp as his body, until he sank into the arms of his father, whom in his fury he had no more recognized than he had Mildred or Sally, who arrived on the scene just in time to witness the close of the tragedy.

Harry Barkstead was taken up dead.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE WATCHMAN'S LANTERN.

HARRY BARKSTEAD lay dead in the clubroom of the Norfolk Hotel.

At one end of the room two pillars, representing two orders of architecture, stood for masonic symbols.

It was the room in which a body of Freemasons met once a month to perform their mysteries.

Once a year the county ball was held there. Elmira Webb had stood outside the Norfolk Hotel to see the fine ladies go in. She was herself a fine lady now, the belle of a winter resort under the blue skies of Italy.

There was no other room, thought the landlord, so fitting for the body to rest in as the dim old clubroom. It would be convenient for the jury to view the corpse and handy for the undertaker, giving, as it did, directly upon the courtyard.

All the others were more or less engaged. The clubroom would not be required until New Year's Day.

It did not matter to Harry Barkstead where his body might be lodged on this occasion, though in his life he was fastidious, not to say luxurious in his tastes.

In due course the hotel went to rest. Yarmouth closed its eyes.

The only wakeful person seemed to be the watchman, who, a lantern in one hand and a stick in the other, left his box at long intervals and announced the hour and the state of the weather.

"Twelve o'clock and a snowy mornin'," was heard that night by many unusually sleepless burgesses, but it made no

impression upon Harry Barkstead ; nor indeed was David Keith conscious of the watchman's cry. One lay dead, and, according to the latest accounts in bar parlor and tap-room and around every winter's fire thereabouts, David Keith was dying.

It was not so, however. David, between white sheets, watched by loving eyes, tended by the best medical skill, lay unconscious in his own comfortable bedroom in Hartley's Row. It was a truckle-bed, with white dimity curtains drawn at the head of it, to shield the sleeper's face from the firelight and the candle that stood in a long round tin box with holes at the sides, through which the light flickered in a furtive sick-room kind of fashion.

Over the mantel there were three silhouette portraits, one of David, one of Sally, and one of Elmira Webb. Sally had not dared to take the latter down, even when the news came to her of the flight of David's sweetheart with his trusted friend. She had determined that when David came back he should come to his own neat and daintily kept little room. There were his hanging bookshelf where he kept volumes for which there was no place downstairs, his oak chest containing sea-shells, pebbles, a few old knives, a dagger, a flint pistol, a bit of the wreck of a ship lost off the North Dunes, and other curiosities. In the closet still hung the jacket he had worn on his expeditions in the *Swallow*.

On the wall, facing the foot of his bed, were florid and shining figures of various heroes cut in relief from printed pictures colored in red and purple and green and blue, and embossed with gold and silver tinsel, giving the effect of splendid armor. William the Conqueror, with a powerful battle ax in one hand, was defying the Black Prince in iron spangles, and flourishing a gigantic sword. There were also representations of Julius Cæsar, Robin Hood, and "King Dick" as Richard II. was invariably called by

the gallant youth of Yarmouth in the heroic days of David Keith.

The firelight played in a friendly way on these familiar objects, but David neither saw them nor it. By the fire, as the watchman called the hour, sat a silent figure, not unlike Don Quixote, grim, bony, with a long neck and rope-like sinews, bright deep eyes, a long face, and a firm yet generous mouth half hid in a straggling mustache that was mixed up with his beard, a curious, thoughtful, kindly, strange looking old man. He was taking his turn with the women who were nursing the unconscious lad, who lay calm and still, with his head bandaged and his lips almost as pale as his face.

But, as you will see, David Keith was better off than Harry Barkstead. David did not know that he was better off. At the time when the watchman cried the hour he might have been as dead as Harry Barkstead so far as he knew; but he was much better off, for all that.

Alan, his father, sat lovingly and patiently at his beck and call when he should wake to consciousness. Moreover he had a nice fire in the room; it was his own room; the old familiar dumb things he had known in his boyish days were waiting for his recognition; and below stairs one of his nurses, in particular, was young and loved him with the fervency of a first love; while the other, who had been to him as a mother, only wanted to be asked to lay down her life for him to do it cheerfully.

While Harry Barkstead was abed in his boots, in a cold, cheerless room, with ghostly memories of Freemasons who had been torn limb from limb in olden days for broken vows, with ghostly memories of bygone feasts, with ghostly memories of dance and song and music from sweet lutes, and all kinds of sad and happy occurrences; no father sitting by, no sweet greeting awaiting his return to consciousness; dead as any of the masons of old

who had handed down the passwords from the days of Solomon.

Harry Barkstead may perhaps be said to have been happy in one thing ; at least he knew nothing of the junketings and fine doings of Lord Grennox and the Lady Webb away in the sunny climes where such a night of snow and chill as had fallen upon Yarmouth was impossible ; nor was he conscious of the bitter scorn with which his father regarded his life and death. What Harry Barkstead's spiritual experiences might be it is not worth while to speculate. But his mortal body was in a sorry state.

And outside these two rooms—the clubroom of the posting house and the chamber in Hartley's Row—the snow fell in a steady downpour. There were no stars ; no sky was to be seen ; hardly a light was visible in Yarmouth except the occasional flicker of the watchman's lantern.

The snow fell all over the land. It came down in such heavy flakes that it even calmed the sea. All the world was hushed. The dunes were rounded hillocks. Never indeed were they anything else except when the wind sometimes blew them into imitations of miniature crags from which they soon fell again into their native shapes ; but on this night of the tragedy at the Norfolk they were rounded with snow, the valleys themselves climbing up into hillocks, the hillocks covering every trace of rush and reed that had been browned by autumn winds and torn by wintry gales.

Along the beach by Caister there was a light in the lookout station, and your imagination might lead you to see the group of sturdy fellows posted there, some lying prone on the benches, others sitting up and smoking their pipes, all ready to go forth to the aid of any ship that might be in distress. But who could go to the aid of that human ship who hung out his light on the Yarmouth side of the lookout, Zaccheus Webb with his light burning to welcome the prodigal daughter, who, without any

thought of him, was walking on flowers and basking in sunshine?

Zaccheus Webb had heard nothing as yet of the death of Harry Barkstead. Curiously enough, he had never once thought of him. From the moment that he knew his daughter had left Caister, no thought but of her entered into his mind. He blamed no one, desired no vengeance, did not dream of following his child—he was stunned with a great blow, and he sat down to wait for Elmira's return. "She'll come hum," he said, "Elmira will, all in good time; she'll come hum!"

And the watchman at uncertain intervals went forth from his shelter, muffled in a comforter, laden with capes, with his slouch hat pulled down over his ears, and proclaimed the flight of time.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THROUGH THE VALLEY.

THE deep, unredeemed shadows of the night that lay so heavy on the town dominated to a great extent the morning and the evening of the next day. Nature seemed to be in sympathy with the gloom of the story that was being told not now in Yarmouth only, but with variations along the coast ; for ill news travels apace, even with snow and darkness against it.

Yarmouth paused, in the midst of her preparations for Christmas, to listen to the details of the fight and to speculate upon the consequences thereof to David Keith. Shop windows in course of decoration with festive fruits and toys were left half finished. The snow interposed, however, with the characteristic embellishment of white drift, and here and there the window panes were frosted with strange designs.

The waits postponed their rehearsals for the time being, and the street hawkers laid aside their sheets of carols in the hope of being provided with more attractive verses descriptive of the tragedy of the posting house.

In the general details of the story, wherever it was told, the figure of Alan Keith loomed up strange and weird. It was related how David's father had suddenly appeared on the scene, a foreign looking stranger in foreign clothes, tall and gaunt, like some queer mariner who'd sailed the world round and round to come at last to the East Coast to find his lad in trouble and to stand by his side perhaps in death. They were by no means without imagination these Eastern folk, and they could not get away from the unaccustomed spectacle of this picturesque and unusual old man.

The beadle was busy summoning the jurymen to sit upon the body. Sir Anthony Barkstead had listened to the account of the witnesses who would be called at the inquest, and all Yarmouth was agreed that since Barkstead struck the first blow, and that a murderous one, David Keith had only acted in self-defense, and could not therefore be answerable for the death of his opponent. Mr. Petherick had indorsed this view, but one of the egotists of the Norfork smoke-room declared without fear of contradiction that a man who took the life of another was guilty of manslaughter, even if that other was a highwayman.

Meanwhile David Keith lay, unconscious of all that was going on around him, in the neat and trim little bedroom that had been daily aired and tidied in the hope of his return. No amount of doubt, no rumor of storm or stress, no story of gales or shipwreck had influenced Sally Mumford in her preparations for the dear lad's home-coming. Her heart misgave her, but she strenuously battled with her fears ; while there was life there was hope, and come when he might, his room should be as ready for him as her welcome.

It was not deemed wise for more than one person at a time to be in the sick room, seeing that pure air was helpful to the patient, so the doctor said. Miss Mumford, Mildred Hope, and Alan Keith therefore took it in turns to watch by the patient's side and carry out the doctor's instructions.

Alan Keith, who had been at first regarded as somewhat eccentric, turned out to be a very wise, careful old man, gentle as a woman, and just as wise in the art of nursing. They grew to love him devotedly, both Sally and Mildred, so even tempered was he, so religious—so practical too, and so reconciled to the will of Heaven. They could not see into the old man's heart, or they would have found it full of an unorthodox approval of David's slaying of the man

who had betrayed his friendship ; but Alan's head came to the aid of his heart, and he assumed a policy of gentleness, contending that his boy had no vengeful feeling, that he would have been satisfied with Barkstead's explanation, if the young squire had vouchsafed him one, but since, instead of that, Barkstead had made a murderous assault upon him, what was he to do but defend himself? Old Petherick had given Alan this judicial hint, telling him that David's safety, if he recovered, would lie in the absence of premeditation ; and happily there was no evidence of any threat, and he had no weapon upon him when he encountered Barkstead. At the same time, the law was very jealous of the taking of life ; and it would need all the evidence and influence that could be obtained in the lad's favor to save him, after he recovered, as they all believed and hoped he would.

The inquest was adjourned from day to day, until such time as David could make his deposition ; for Petherick contended that his deposition should be taken, his policy being to regard David as the aggrieved person in the case, although the other was dead. Magisterial opinion was rather for looking upon David as a person resting under a grave charge, and therefore not to be interrogated ; and such police authority as existed outside the borough watchman held Sally Mumford's house under surveillance.

Mildred Hope found time, between the intervals of nursing, to attend to her duties of charity. Wherever she went she had good words for David, and she asked many of her humblest dependents to pray for him. Mildred plodded through the snow to the toll-house jail and read to the prisoners, went to Sunday school, visited the sick, and seemed to be endowed with fresh energies and power. Whether he lived or died she had the privilege of smoothing David's pillow, and the only time since the moment when he fell into the arms of his father that he had seemed

to know anyone, he had looked at her and touched her hand. She loved him, and now that he was sick and in trouble she had ventured to confess her love—not to any human being, but in her prayers to God. Mildred did not regard prayer in the commonplace orthodox fashion of, "Ask and ye shall receive," but as a duty; not in the way of petition so much for strength to do what was right as a vow to hold by, the expression of a wish that Heaven might think well to grant. She had been accustomed for years to speak on her knees of all that she wished and desired, of all she felt that it was worthy to feel; and never, until the bond between Elmira and David was broken, had she confessed even to herself that she loved David Keith; indeed, when she had been conscious of it, she had rather regarded it as a sin, and had repressed it, for were not his word and his heart given to Elmira Webb?

It is true she had listened to Sally Mumford when David's foster-mother had declared she would like to have seen her engaged to David. She had striven however to discourage repetitions of Sally's opinions and desires in that direction. But now, although David might be drifting out with the tide to that last harbor, she was conscious of a mysterious joy; she dared to love him; she dared to say so in her prayers; she dared to lay bare her heart and pray that it might not be a wicked thing to do.

It was Mildred who had received Sir Anthony Barkstead when he called to inquire after David's condition. Sir Anthony was pale, and he spoke low and sorrowfully; but he had said to Mildred, whom he knew as the prison visitor and with whose good work he was well acquainted, that he wished it to be understood that he did not blame David for what had happened. The law of course would take its course, and it was not for him to suggest what that course might be, but it was his wish, when the lad was well enough to be spoken to concerning what had happened, that

he should be told how Harry Barkstead's father exonerated and forgave him.

The law did take its course. First there was the inquest, adjourned until David Keith should be out of danger. The body having been sufficiently viewed by the members of the quest, Sir Anthony took it home to Ormesby Hall, where the poor, harmless mortal thing was washed and laid out where its mother had reposed in the first days of her long sleep. And presently the stern, hard look of the misguided heir to an honored name and a fine estate relaxed, and Sir Anthony saw in the softened features the face of his son as he had known it in its innocence, and before the funeral bell began to toll he was reconciled to the dead image of the son he had loved, and there were tears in his eyes, and his heart heaved, as he followed it to the grave.

"But I must do my duty to that other one," he said, sitting down by his lonely hearth, when the day was over.

First, as is recorded in the legal record of the case, came the inquest, its adjournment, and the burial of the body. Then came adjournment after adjournment until David's deposition could be taken, and it was taken with the fear of death before his eyes, and fortunately for him the few questions put to him were very simple and his story was amply corroborated. While Mr. Petherick had no *locus standi* before the court except by the courtesy of the coroner, he was an important factor in formulating the evidence and drawing forth the points favorable to David. The accounts given by the lookers-on who saw the beginning of the altercation, the first blow struck by Barkstead and the last by Keith, were very explicit, and tended not only to reduce the crime to manslaughter, but even to suggest the possibility of a verdict of justifiable homicide, though the law at the time was far more severe than it is now.

In the end the jury, after some discussion as to the form

and presentation of their verdict, gave it as "manslaughter with extenuating circumstances."

The coroner thereupon issued his warrant for the arrest of David Keith. In response to this, medical evidence satisfied the authorities that David was not in a fit condition to be removed from Hartley's Row.

A few weeks later the case came before the magistrates. David was well enough to plead. The case was taken in the chief magistrate's room, a limited number of the public being admitted.

The evidence given before the coroner was repeated, and the magistrates came to the conclusion that it was their duty to commit David for trial at the forthcoming assizes, but they were willing to take substantial bail for his appearance.

Sir Anthony Barkstead, to the surprise of everybody present, thereupon rose from a seat with which he had been accommodated, apart from the magistrates' table, and offered himself as one of David's sureties, Mr. Waveny Petherick at the same time standing forward as another.

The sureties being in every way satisfactory, David was released to take his trial at the regular jail delivery in March.

"Permit me to thank you, sir, for your great kindness in this painful matter," said Alan Keith, approaching Sir Anthony as he was leaving the court.

"I conceive it to be only an act of duty," was Sir Anthony's reply.

The two fathers bowed to each other and passed on their way.

Mildred had watched the magistrates' house from afar. She dared not trust herself in the court. When she saw David come forth with Miss Mumford, his father, and Mr. Petherick, and go toward Hartley's Row, with many sympathizers following, she followed too, uttering little prayers

of thankfulness that David was better and a free man. She had not reckoned upon a committal to the assizes. On her way she met Mr. Petherick going to his office. He informed her of the magisterial decision.

"Don't be alarmed," he said, answering her sudden expression of anxiety, "he is sure to get off with a very light punishment, perhaps with no punishment at all; if you have to count him among the prisoners at the toll-house jail he will not need your visitations for long."

CHAPTER XLIV.

A BAD DREAM WITH A LOVELY IMAGE IN IT.

FEBRUARY had set in with unusual suggestions of an early spring. Tufts of crocuses appeared in the flowerpots that filled every one of the window sills of Miss Mumford's house in Hartley's Row.

Alan Keith had already begun to rise at an early hour and take long walks, revolving in his mind his long cherished idea of visiting Newfoundland and unearthing his buried treasure.

By the banks of the Waveny, and through the meadows by dyke and homestead, he had already heard the woodlark and the thrush. Along the beach the sea rolled in with a pleasant sound of promise. Fishing smacks came and went with every tide. On market days the stalls were brightened with the first flowers of the year, and the drying winds of March began to stir the dust long before February was at an end.

David was fast recovering.

It was noted by Sally Mumford with a grateful joy that he said nothing of Elmira. She almost hoped that the effect of his wound might have been to wipe old Webb's daughter entirely out of his memory. She had heard of such things happening as the obliteration of certain occurrences in the minds of men and women who had sustained hurts in fearful accidents.

As David improved in health, Mildred Hope became shy and reserved. He never failed to ask after her whenever she stayed away from the house more than an hour or two at a time. Sally declared the lad could not get along with-

out Mildred. Alan Keith had come to find the girl a necessity. She knew so many things, was so deft with her needle, so learned as to geography, and so generous and wise in her views of religion—theology having of late become quite a serious subject with Alan. Furthermore, her charities were so remarkable and on so large a scale, considering that she was poor and had no seemingly settled organization.

As for David, he seemed to be awakening from a dream. He mixed up the loss of the *Morning Star* with the incident of the posting house. Old Matt White, of the Welsh Back, and Zaccheus, now and then appeared to be the same person. Elmira Webb was something to pity, not to sigh for; a fairy of the mist, who had mocked him to his shame; a something such as old Matt White might have seen when he beckoned and waved imaginary flags before he flung himself overboard to cool his burning face and find a lasting rest.

It was a bad dream with a lovely image in it, and a siren's voice; they no longer pulled at his heart; and it might be that the tender eyes and calm, sweet face of Mildred Hope had already begun their eclipse of the bold, handsome, defiant countenance of Elmira Webb.

One day when Sally Mumford had designedly left David and Mildred alone in the house, Alan being at Gorleston discussing ships with a skipper almost as battered as himself, David asked after Zaccheus Webb.

David was sitting in an old armchair by the fire. Mildred was embroidering a bodice for a country lady, in the interest of a poor little cripple of Caister. She was in one of her happiest moods, looked the picture of an honest, loving English maiden; small as to stature as we know, but with soft gray eyes, rich brown hair, a mouth made rather for love than religious recluseship, and white teeth that made her laughter lovely.

While he talked with her, David looked mostly into the fire. Once in a way he turned to her as if to emphasize a question. Mildred answered him in a quiet, subdued voice. There was still between the two, in manner, more of the invalid and the nurse than belonged to the intercourse of neighbors and friends.

The old clock ticked regularly in an encouraging and soothing way, and the hot cinders dropped now and then into the firepan beneath the grate with a similar drowsy influence that helped calm conversation.

"I had almost forgotten old Zacchy. How is the poor old chap?"

"Quite well, bodily," said Mildred.

"Still waiting?" asked David, his mind, which had kept clear of the sad memory of his return to the cottage, now going back to it.

"Yes."

"For her?"

"Yes."

"Still waiting, sitting by the fire and saying she'll come home?"

"Yes."

"Poor old Zacchy!"

"He rarely leaves the house."

"I can see him as I saw him that day—shattered, broken, a very sorrowful old man; it was not he who told me about her."

This was the first time David had mentioned Elmira.

"No?"

"It was that woman misnamed Charity."

This was the first harsh word he had uttered.

"She seems to be very kind to the old man," said Mildred.

"Yes?"

"I have been there very often, and have always found her attentive to his wants."

"How good you are!" David answered, looking at her.

"It is easy to be good when there is so much misery about," said Mildred, bending afresh over her work.

"Easy for you to be good," said David, turning his face once more to the fire.

"You say truly," she answered, "it is easy for me to be good, but to think of Mr. Webb—he is good, yet his heart is breaking."

"'Keener than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child,'" said David; "how true, how sad! I will go and see Zaccheus; we will both go."

"When you are well enough," said Mildred. "You have been reading Shakspere?"

"A little! If Zaccheus only had a younger daughter to comfort him; he is childless, you see, now."

David sank back in his chair and put his hand to his head. The blow that Harry Barkstead had struck him with his loaded whip was a terribly shrewd one, cruelly aimed, viciously given; perhaps Harry had noticed the murderous light in David's face, and had meant to anticipate the lad's attack; David had had a very narrow escape of his life.

"You have talked too much," said Mildred, laying down her work to hand him a jar of salts which the doctor had recommended whenever David felt faint, and at the same time she reminded him that it was time he took the tonic that had been prescribed for him.

David put out his hand, not to take the salts, but to clasp his long fingers over the white, soft hand that held them.

"No, I am not faint, I am better; my memory is coming back to me in bounds; some things I am thinking of overcome me a little. Won't you sit by me, Mildred?"

"Yes, if you wish it," she answered, drawing up her chair by his side.

He took her hand in his, pressed it fondly, and looked into the fire once more, not seeing how her color came and went, not feeling the quick beating of her heart.

"Dear Mildred," he said, "you were good to her because I loved her. Yes, I know it; you could not have loved her. I know you didn't; you were sorry for her, you tried to help her, you did it for my sake. Nay, do not take your hand from me, Sally has told me."

"I never said so," Mildred answered.

"No, you never would have said it, I know that. I always knew you were good and generous, but never knew how good—how should I, a thoughtless, selfish happy lad, without any experience of the world and its ways—how should I?"

"You were never selfish," said Mildred, "and youth is necessarily thoughtless; thoughts come later with sorrow."

"What is your highest ambition, Mildred?"

"I don't think I quite know," was the reply.

"I begin to think I know mine," said David, "but what is yours, Mildred? My father was full of his yesterday, full of it; and if he does not dream, and I think he does not, he is a very rich man. He loves you, Mildred; loves you, he says, as if you were his own daughter—and when I get free—if I do get free, Mildred—he wants to do something for your poor people, something to help you fulfill your highest hopes; he wants, he says, to be Providence to your prayers, to answer them with a full hand, so that you may give with a lavish one."

"How he loves you!" said Mildred, "to think so much of your friend's ambition. But you said if you obtained your freedom? What do you mean?"

"Ah, my dear friend, you forget that I have yet to stand in the dock at the assizes," said David, "and it does not

need a Shakspere to tell us the uncertainties of the law, the Scripture teaches us that. Who knows, perhaps you may extend your prison ministrations to me!"

"O David, you make my heart ache," said Mildred, suddenly, withdrawing her hand to cover her face; "they can never send you to such a place as that!"

"Mildred," he answered, turning toward her and bending his head over her. "it would be heaven enough for me if you were there!"

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE PATIENCE OF ZACCHEUS WEBB.

"You'n a sight better this mornin'," said Charity Dene, "doan't say yo' baint."

"I dunno," said Zaccheus Webb, taking the seat Mrs. Dene placed for him.

"You dunno, but I do; weather's took turn for better, yon old hunx o' your'n says fishin's good likewise."

"Aye, shouldna wonder," replied Webb, "I dunno mek nowt much a what you be arter, Charity. You'n got news, eh?"

"Not about her, no news o' Mira; news of him."

"Who?" asked Webb, as he took the slice of bread which Charity cut for him, and laid a rasher of bacon upon it.

"Him as killed t'other wun."

"Aye, so he did, I'd forgotten. 'Twere David made a boggert on him—think I seed un t'other night."

"Seed un? Seed who?"

"Boggert o' him as cum here and made off wi' Mira. They was reed-cuttin' at the time."

"Wish you'd go reed-cuttin' or summat," said Charity. "Drink your coffee; I thowt yo was a-comin' to your senses, and you go maudlin' on wuss than ever."

Mrs. Dene talked to Zaccheus as if he were both deaf and blind. He had only recently come out of what she called "his fit o' sittin' over fire and talkin' rubbish to hissen."

"I knaw what ya's talkin' on," said Webb, drinking his coffee and eating his bread and bacon.

"Oh, you do, do you? Well, I'm glad to hear yo' say so; it argues you're comin' round. I was a-goin' to tell yo' about case at 'sizes."

"'Sizes?"

"Doan't yo' remember me a-tellin' yo' all about row at postin' housen? Doan't yo' remember prison visitor tellin' yo'?"

"Missie Hope?"

"Oh, yo' remember her, do yo'?"

"Mildred Hope, she wor fond o' Mira, she wor."

At thought of the two girls as he had seen them together, Zaccheus left the table and set down by the fire.

"Eh, dear! there ye go agen," said Charity Dene, "yo'n say no more for a week. I'm gettin' kinder tired o' this. Here, tek your pipe, you're an owd fool—just as yo' was comin' round and all!"

The woman filled his pipe and gave it to him. He looked up at her in a dumb, distressed way, remarking, "I knaw all about it; doan't ye bother; she'll come hum, Mira will, she'll come hum."

"I dessay she may, and I dessay she mayn't," said Charity, lighting his pipe, at which he began to pull.

"Mek no doubt on it, all i' good time," he said.

"Lord! Lord! what a fuss about a bit of a wench! Why, when I was a gel it was a common thing for a lass to run off, aye, and to somethin' even wuss than what Mira's got. Wuss! why, I heard say at Norfolk as she'd left Squire Barkstead for a dook, and was a-drivin' i' her carriage wi' don't knaw how many servants the like of which was fit for a queen. Well, she had a way wi' her, had our Mira; it was that imperuous at times as you'd 'a' thought she was brought up on a nigger plantation wi' a whip in her hand, but, mostly good-tempered—mostly—that's true, and such a merry grig. Not no good a-tryin' to keep a lass o' that build down here fishin' and muddlin' about, not no

kind o' use that. I said so to Squire Barkstead. And to think o' they two meetin' as they did! And him a-killin' the other—leastways, doin' of him in a feight. But he wor a 'igh-tempered un, that David! And proud! I should think so!"

"When wether tuk up I said she'll come, not i' the snow and slush, but i' the sun wi' a westerly breeze."

"Yes, oh, yes!" said Charity scornfully, "and live at hoame, and tak' a hand wi' the herrin' curin', shouldn't wonder, and help mek the beds and mess about with slops and the like. That's reight, she'll come."

"I dunno what yo means 'bout 'sizes."

"Hello! what, wakkin' up again? Well, I'm sure! Why, he was tried at 'sizes yesterday, and Bor Green as brought groceries from Yarmouth says they've 'quitted un."

"Killed un, didn't 'e?" Webb asked, looking round with a curious attempt at understanding.

"Killed un, aye, and crowner said it was with extended circumstances, meanin' as t'other struck fust blow."

"So I shouldna wonder."

"Well, he was buried, and t'other was tried; last time pays for all—tried at 'sizes David Keith for manslaughter, and jury said 'Not Guilty!'"

"Not guilty," Webb repeated, and turned once more to the fire.

"They said at fust, the jury did, as he was justified, but judge he said they mun put it more explicit, so after puttin' yeds together a bit they said 'Not Guilty'; and Bor David Keith he be 'quitted, doan't 'e see, 'quitted of the whul things."

"David was mortal fond; but she'll come hum, Mira will."

"Why, bless me, here be Miss Hope! She'll tell you all about it, and surely Master David Keith his very self. Lor, sir, I axes your pardon! Last time you was here you was

upset and I was upset, but I hadn't got reight hang o' things, and truth is I liked him better nor you, and I couldn't help it, so there! But I meks my humble 'pology, all the same."

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Dene," said David. "I was anxious at the first opportunity to see my old friend."

"Here be Mas'r David Keith," said Charity, plucking Webb by the sleeve.

Webb turned his head and tried to fix his blinking eyes on David, who drew a chair near the old man and laid his hand upon his arm.

"Don't you know me, Zacky, dear old friend?"

"Knaw you? Lord A'mighty, yas, I knaws yo'! She'll come, doan't yo' mek no doubt. Knaw yo'! Oh, my God!"

The old man rose to his feet, held his hand upon his heart, and began to pace the room. Then, seeing Mildred, he paused to look at her.

"An yo' browt her hum?" he asked.

"Not yet," said Mildred, "we must pray for her, and have patience."

"That's so, patience, have patience; I can wait, I can wait; winter'll pass all i' good time."

Then he sat down again. David took his hand. The old man smiled in a helpless kind of way.

"You have let your pipe out," said David, "let me light it for you?"

David took the pipe and lighted it. Zaccheus put it to his lips.

"It be true?" he said in a whisper, "yo' be Master David Keith?"

"Quite true, old friend."

"Charity 'muses me wi' fables; but I knaw yo' well enough, if yo' say I baint dreamin'."

"Dreaming, Zaccheus, not a bit of it!" David replied.

"Haven't we had many a voyage on the *Scud*! Haven't I rowed the dingey many a time to meet you off Gorleston?"

"Surely, surely!" said Zaccheus, laying his pipe aside and withdrawing his hand from David to rub his palms together, remarking with a chuckle, "and Charity says I be stark, starin' mad."

"She is only joking," said David.

"I knaw, I knaw. She thinks I doan't knaw as Mira have gone; she thinks I doan't knaw the world's a-goin' all wrong, and the fish is a' caught. Doan't tell me, I knaws all about it."

He rubbed his wrinkled hands together, smiling knowingly, but with such a sad look in his eyes that the tears came into David's, and he turned to ask Mildred to speak to the poor old fellow.

But Charity Dene had beckoned Mildred to the window seat. Having answered Mildred's many questions about the old man, she herself became the interrogator. Yes, it was quite true, Mildred said, that the first finding of the jury was considered to be informal, although it meant that David had acted in self-defense, that his action was justifiable. The judge had instructed them that this being their opinion—and the foreman said it was their unanimous opinion—their formal verdict should be "Not Guilty." There was great applause in court at this; and then the jury consulted together, and the foreman stood forward and in answer to the clerk of arraigns, he said they found the prisoner not guilty. There was more applause in court at that, and David turned toward his father with a great sigh of relief; and the next moment father and son embraced each other, and people shed tears as the old man laid his head upon David's shoulder, overcome with emotion.

"Eh dear, eh dear, just to think of it!" said Charity Dene, "and I've knowed a man to be hanged for poachin'!"

"We are all deeply thankful to God for David's escape,

and shall never cease to deplore the death of his assailant. You have much to regret also, Charity Dene."

"I know, I know," said Charity, "and I shall of course never hear the last of that. Measter Justice Barkstead towd me I ought to be whipped, and I don't forget first words as you said to me when yo' knowed as I left them in the house together; but what was I to do? He was so oncommon pleasant and so rich, and paid me so well. And what's more I thought it wor best thing for Miss Webb."

"O Charity, you could not have thought that!" said Mildred quickly.

"But I did. It mought hev been my blessed ignorance, but I did."

"You don't think so now?"

"No, I got over that, I'll allow, and I see that never no good can come of a bad action. Don't be angry wi' me, Miss Hope, I hev done my best since then, and will to the end; and though I did like young Squire Barkstead as was killed better nor t'other, I will say I'm glad Master David Keith is better than I expected he mought hev been, and I'm mortal glad they didn't conclude to hang him."

Charity, while penitent to some extent in regard to her share in the tragedy, could not feel sufficiently kind to let Mildred off without these passing reflections.

"David Keith's first wish, on being unanimously acquitted by a jury of his fellow-countrymen and with the approval of the judge," said Mildred, "was to see Elmira's father; and this is his first outing during his convalescence; for you know that he was dangerously wounded, do you not, in that unhappy meeting?"

"Yes, I knowed that, and I was main sorry," said Charity.

"And furthermore he wished to drive over to the look-out to see some other old friends of his and Mr. Webb's; and when we say good-by to you, David will go and tell

the lookout men that he is going to present them with a new boat to be called the *Zaccheus Webb.*"

"Which I'm sure they need one, and they'll be proud to have it ca'd after our master; they often comes, the men do, to ask after him, and some on 'em tries to hev a crack wi' him, but they finds it 'ard to mek anything out of un, and he do look at 'em sometimes that queer as you doesn't knaw whether to laugh or cry."

"Who is managing his business?"

"Oh, as for that, there baint much management in it. That owd hunx William does his best, and lookout cap'n he gives a sort of hand to it, and Mr. Petherick be a-takin' an interest in things."

"Then you may be sure the best will be done that can be done in that direction," said Mildred.

"I tek that for granted, and I hope you'll excuse me for sayin' you looks hearty, miss, and I hope as prisoners and other poor folk is doing pretty well?"

"Thank you," said Mildred, "I wish I could do more for them," moving toward the fire, as David rose to take leave of Zaccheus.

"I must say good-by now," said David, laying his hand upon the old man's arm.

"David Keith," muttered Zaccheus, "made for a sailor, mortal fond o' Mira."

"Good-by, old friend."

Zaccheus held David's hand.

"It was while the *Scud* was laid up i' Boston," he said.

"Yes," David replied, "try and think when we used to sit in the garden and talk of ships at sea and first signs of the herring."

"I meant it to have been a fine weddin' when David come back—David Keith, young lawyer chap as aimed to be fisherman; but there, yo' nivver knaw how weather's goin' to be wi' glass shiftin' up and down like a skip-jack."

"It will be settled weather soon," said David, "then I'll come back and Mildred will come, and we will put to sea in a three-master and sail right into the sunshine."

"I dunno what be a-talkin' of, but I likes to hear yo' —doan't leave me."

The old man turned his wrinkled and pitiful face up to David, who still held the old man's trembling hand.

"I will come back," said David.

"It's a long time waitin'," the old man remarked, his mind going off again to thoughts of Mira, "I'n waited and waited; but she'll come, I mek na doubt, if I can only live through the storm. It's a hard un to weather; but we mun never despair."

"That's right," said David. "Good-by for the present."

Zaccheus lapsed into silence, his gaze fixed upon the fire, his hands lying idly upon his knee, his worn face showing no further signs of intelligence or life.

Mildred knelt down by his side and thought a prayer for him; and as she rose, she kissed the helpless hands and said, "Good-by, poor, dear broken-hearted father! Good-by!"

"That's wust on it," said Charity, smoothing her apron, "he goes off into them fits o' unconsciousness, or whatsumever they may be, and it'll tek me hours to rouse him."

"I am sure you are good to him," said Mildred. "Let me ask you to accept this little gift, and I want you to write a letter to an address I shall send you. The postage will be costly, but I will give you money."

"Yes, miss. Who be I to get to write him?"

"I forgot that you cannot write, Charity. I shall ask one of Mr. Petherick's clerks to wait upon you, and you can tell him what you wish to say."

"Thank you kindly," said the woman, making a courtesy.

"Good-by, then," said Mildred.

David, dividing his attention between the silent figure by

the fire and Mildred's leave-taking, watched the prison visitor with a newborn admiration of her gentle ways and her soft, sweet voice.

"A blind woman might see which way the cat's a-jumpin'," said Charity to herself, as she watched Mildred and David plodding over the sand-hills to the lookout station. "It's a wonderful thing how ewents do come about. She was always fond on him, that religious lass wi' her soft ways and her insinooatin' voice, and as I says, religion aint no bar to love, not a bit, though men's shy on it; not as religion ever seemed to hurt Mildred Hope so far as bein' happy and the like, and even passing over a joke good-natured. I never see a neater ankle, nor a nattier foot. I've heard Mira say the same, and I think it made Mira go to that high and mighty bootmaker as got his wares, they says, from France, not as Mildred needed such 'elps to nattiness; and as for her figure, well I've often said the young man as gets Mildred woan't need to repine, staid as they say she is, for she's blessed wi' everything, I should say, as a young man might desire. I dessay that Master Keith may be Master Right to her, but he's a way wi' him as I never liked so well as Squire Barkstead; but then he had never the money; the way as squire chucked his guineas about—well it was enough to turn a lass's head. It turned mine, I knaw, and I's sorry for it; but what's the good o' sayin' 'lead us not into temptation,' when a fine-spoken young feller like him comes about wi' his guineas, and his dimings, and his jewels, and his nice manners, and a-singing songs like a male angel, as I says to Mira many's the time? Well, we never knows what's a-goin' to come to pass—but if them two aint made up their minds about a weddin' ring and all the rest, Charity Dene's no judge, and you can just count her out as no good. Hello! dear, dear! why you'll burn your boots. Come out o' that!

The old man slipped toward the fire until his boots rested

on the bars. His face was curiously drawn, and his eyes were full of tears.

"Come, come, master, what's the matter? Get up, man! get up!"

She took him by the arm, pushed his chair from the fire, and he began to sob.

"That's reight now, you'll be better. I was afeard it was something wuss, that a' was! I once seed my father in a fit, and it began just like that. But there, it's only come from feeling a bit upset thinkin' o' things. Come, master, let me gie yo' a drop o' drink; that'll put you right."

She went to the cupboard and brought out a tumbler, into which she poured a fair modicum of brandy and pressed it to his lips.

"That's right," she said, as the old man opened his lips and began to drink. "That's reight, we all 'as our feelin's; and yo'n been hard put to it, that's a fact."

"Thank!" said the old man, "thank!" and stretching his stiffened limbs he rose to his feet and walked to the window.

"Want to see 'em? They's gone to the lookout; be goin' to gie 'em a boat and call it after yo'—*Zaccheus Webb.*"

"That's so," he said, leaning against the window frame, his wet eyes wandering over the gray sea.

CHAPTER XLVI.

ALL ON A SUMMER'S DAY.

When the summer came again Zaccheus Webb's bed was drawn up to the window that he might, propped up on his pillows, see the garden and look out to sea.

He only spoke now in whispers. Except for the hair upon them, denoting a strength that had gone, his hands were white, and so thin that you could count the bones in them. His face had lost most of its curious puckered wrinkles. A straggling beard partly concealed his mouth and chin. His eyes were sunken. There was a restfulness in their expression, and in the quiet mouth, that betokened the approach of a painless death. He was like a ship outward bound that waited for a favoring wind.

Beneath the window was the rustic seat where Harry Barkstead had waited for David and Elmira on that day when David had told the girl of his projected trip to Newfoundland, and had walked home afterward too triumphantly for Harry's jealous and crooked nature. The dusky beauty with her golden crown and her weather-beaten face still dominated the old seat. The nasturtiums were climbing over her faded gown. The box-edged flower beds had been somewhat neglected, but they put forth radiant tributes to the sun nevertheless—peonies, clove-pinks, rosemary, pansies, sweet peas—and the lilac and laburnum were shedding their flowers upon the graveled walk in a fading splendor of perfume and color. Over the cottage porch a thousand rosebuds were bursting into bloom, and down even to the margin of the sea the dunes were decorated with waving grasses and humble flowers

that trailed along the sands as if nature were designing a carpet for fairy footfalls.

On one of the stillest days of this sweet summertime, a steam yacht, one of the first handsome vessels of the kind, built for pleasure and fitted with a luxury of furniture and convenience hitherto unknown in sea-going craft, appeared off Caister and cast anchor.

Zaccheus saw it, Charity Dene saw it. The sun seemed to give it a friendly recognition, flashing on its brass stranchions and whitening its smoking funnel.

Presently a boat was lowered. Two sailors dropped into it. A woman descended by a short rope ladder. She waved her hand to a gentleman in a yachting jacket as she took her seat in the stern, and the two sailors pulled for the shore.

The old man watched the boat, and Charity Dene watched Zaccheus.

"Yo' an got eyes of late that look straight into future," said the woman in a low voice. "What do yo' make on it?"

"Mira!" said the old man, "Mira!"

"Pray God it be!" said Charity, now much more gentle in her manner toward the old man than when we saw her last. The presence of death had softened her, and she was sorry for the broken-hearted old fisherman.

"I hev prayed" said Zaccheus, lifting his head with difficulty so as not to lose sight of the boat.

"You be the most patient man I hev ivver knowed, Master Webb," said Charity, raising his head and propping him up with an extra pillow.

"I knawed she'd come," he replied, and there could be no mistaking the lithe, active woman who, the boat being driven right upon the beach, leaped ashore and made straight for the old cottage.

Charity did not seem to have the power to leave the room. There was nobody below stairs. They heard their

visitor swing open the garden gate, heard her enter the cottage, heard her call out in an impatient, anxious way, "Charity! where are you? Father!"

The old man looked at Charity, who responded with an anxious glance toward the door. All was quiet again. The visitor had evidently gone into the back part of the cottage. Then the door at the foot of the stairway was unlatched and a footstep was heard approaching—a quiet footstep, as if the visitor had suddenly learned that there was sickness in the house.

The door opened. A lovely woman with a pale, tearful face stood in the doorway for a moment, and then with a smothered cry flung herself upon her knees by the bed.

"Mira!" said Zaccheus, stretching a long thin arm toward her, "Mira!"

She buried her face in the bedside and with one hand felt for his across the clothes. Their hands found each other, Zaccheus tried to draw his child toward him, but he was very feeble.

"Do 'e get up!" said Charity, taking Elmira gently by the arm.

"Oh, my God!" said the woman, choking with her tears, "I have killed him!"

"Mira!" said the old man, "I knawed you'd come. Mira, kiss me!"

She leaned over him and pressed a burning kiss upon his mouth, and stroked his thin hair, and sobbed and cried until Charity Dene could do nothing but sit down and smother her own tears in her apron.

But there were no tears in the eyes of Zaccheus. On the contrary, he smiled and looked happy.

"Oh! father, father! I have nothing to say, only I love you—yes, dear, I do. I was mad—vain; I——"

"My dear love!" whispered the old man; "Mira! I knawed ye'd never let me go and not say good-by."

"Father, I have one thing to say," she went on between her sobs. "I am a married woman now and have a son, and he will some day be an earl, and——"

Zaccheus did not care whether she was married or not. He heard none of the cheap explanation with which the poor vain foolish woman hoped to soothe his last hours. He was not at any time sufficiently trained in the ways of the world to appreciate the honor which one aristocrat had conferred on the mistress of another, nor to understand the distinction of being the grandfather of a dishonored son. He only knew that his child had come back to him. He only remembered her as the bright angel of his widowerhood; his pretty, loving girl who sang "Cupid's Garden," and could handle an oar with the best beachman of Yarmouth. He did not see the jewel on her finger, nor note the texture of her yachting gown. He felt her hand in his; heard her voice; she had kissed him; he remembered nothing of her but what was sweet; and all he had to say was, "Mira, love, I knowed you'd come."

The sun shone brightly on sea and garden as he slept. It burned in at the window, so lavish of its beams that Charity drew the blind. They both sat long by the bed and watched, and Elmira remembered snatches of prayers that Mildred Hope had taught her, but he did not wake again. The patient soul of the Caister smacksman had put to sea. It was enough for Zaccheus that her hand was in his when he was signaled to lift anchor for his latest voyage.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE BURIED TREASURE.

THAT same sweet summer's day that saw Zaccheus Webb weigh anchor for his last voyage saw Alan Keith and David his son sail into the still waters of Wilderness Creek.

It was on just such a day that Alan, some thirty years previously, had first discovered the secret harbor.

Here it was once more with its reflections of Demon's Rock, its sandy shores, its distant range of sheltering hills, and its weird and happy memories.

When David dropped the anchor of the smack *Nautilus*, which his father had bought at St. John's, the old man, after contemplating the scene for some minutes, could only remark, "It's very hot, David, for Labrador." It was not a romantic observation. But as the leading incidents of Alan's life passed before him almost like a flash, with this remarkable *dénouement*—this return to Nasquappe and the harbor, and the rendezvous of his band of patriots and free-booters—his mind seemed to find relief in the most prosaic observations.

"Is it?" was David's none the less commonplace reply.

"Maist as hot as Spain," said Alan, "and the silence o' the place reminds me o' Venice when I made excursions on the lagoons i' the neight time."

"It is very quiet," said David, "and very beautiful."

"I propose we just tak' a drink, David," said the old man. "As for mysel', I'll temporize the watter wi' a bit o' whusky."

As he spoke Alan drew half a tumbler of water from the keg which he had sheltered from the sun at the stern of the

boat, and poured into it a modicum of whisky from a stone jar, which was part of certain necessaries of food and drink in a hamper stored close by.

"Here's to ye!" said Alan, wiping his lips and passing the jar to David.

"Water for me, father," said David. "I'll try your dew of the mountain later, when we smoke."

"As ye will," said Alan, restoring the jar to the hamper and the horn tumbler with it, "ye didna thenk there was aught as fine as this i' these latitudes, eh?"

"As fine," said David, "but not as beautiful. Why, it might be one of the holiday lakes one hears about in your native Scotland."

"Eh, man, ye're reight there, it's the sairt o' country that gets into your brain; and I tell ye, my son, the story o' this harbor is to me something like a fable o' long and long ago; and yet, at the minute when we run in here as if we'd oiled our keel, it was like yesterday, wi' all its strange and true happenings thick in my memory."

"Don't you think we might moor the smack to yonder piles?" said David.

"The thing I was gaen to sae mysel', David, if they'll houd. I remember John Preedie and Donald Nicol driving them, nigh on thirty years back," said Alan.

"They look strong enough for a ship, let alone a smack," said David, hauling up the anchor which he had previously dropped. "Will you take an oar, father?"

Alan thrust a long oar into its rowlock, David taking up another and trying to use it as a pole to shove the boat and steer her at the same time.

Alan laughed; a rare habit with him. David hardly remembered when he had heard him laugh, though his smile was pleasant to see, and frequent.

"Ye might as weel try to sound the Atlantic wi' a marline spike, man; it's a' but fathomless i' the middle; gradual

as the shores shelve doonward, they come to the same kind o' precipice as the table land above the Rock yonder, and then it's watter below just as it's sky above ; pull noo, starboard ; that's it, laddie, noo sling your rope ; that's got her ! "

"Hold ! " said David, straining on the rope. "Why the timber is as solid as the rock."

The smack lay as still as she had lain before, her keel breaking into the reflections of the noble face of Demon's Rock.

"Ye see the cairns yonder amang the foothills o' the rock ? " Alan asked, pointing across the sandy shore to the mountain.

"Yes," David replied, pulling on his rough jacket.

"The sand, and the wind, and the bit growth o' sea-thistles and the like hae been vera usefu'—wha'd think o' questioning the sinceerity o' tombstones on which Time has written such epitaphs ! "

"They look grim and serious," said David.

"Laddie, they are grim and serious, maist o' them—all except the three i' the middle—I ca' them the Three Graces —and the one to the north o' the row."

"How do you know one from the other—the real graves and the treasure casks ? "

"How did I ken the channel that brought us to the spot ? " was Alan's reply.

David had asked his question in a non-committal inquiring spirit, more by way of saying something than with a view to question his father. He had it in his mind to prepare himself and his father for the breaking up of a wild delusion, the bursting of a bubble, the awakening from a dream ; for he had never altogether, even in his most sanguine moments, accepted his father's account of the buried treasure as anything more than an unconscious exaggeration of some more or less trivial secreting of hard-won savings, if not the baseless fancy of a mind distraught.

"David, I hae dreamed mysel' shoutin' and dancin', if ever I lived to resurrect the Three Graces. I hae thought o' mysel' as goin' just wild when the time should come that I stood here again; and it's only o' late, as ye ken, that I began to think o' you by my side, my son, Hannah's child. What wad ha' been the use o' the goud and things wi'out ye, David? And yet I used to dream about bein' here and gloatin' ower it; but that maun 'a' been prophetic in a way, for it was surely ordained that I should find ye at last, as I did. Eh, man, what a meetin' it was! David, we'll be grateful to God for it; we'll consider ourselves his stewards."

David felt his doubts increase as his father went rambling on, never attempting to advance toward the pathetic looking cemetery, with its stones packed up originally into the shape of crosses, now crooked, fallen into odd forms, with gray bits of weed and lichen on them, and drifts of sand held together by stringy grasses.

"I couldna ha' believed that I should stand here sae calm and businesslike, as if the cairns o' Wilderness Creek and the mighty rock above them, to say naething about the cavern beyond, were the maist commonplace things i' nature. D'ye see the cavern, David? Ye'll imagine it's the entrance to a cathedral, man, when ye hae passed the foothills and the cairns, sae grand is it; and it's away up above that I hae stored the other bit money and scrip I telt ye of, and the wee bit huts and the rest."

David's imagination was touched with the lonely beauty of the scene, the strangeness of their visit, the rock toward which his father waved his long bony hand, a vast solid mighty stone, as it seemed, with ridges cut into it and sharp ledges, and with a tall smooth crown contrasting in a striking way with the jagged peaks and points of the army of sentinels that took their orders, as it were, from the chief, and went ranging along the coast for miles and miles, look-

ing out to sea and at the same time peering up into the heavens.

"Shove off the gangway, David, my son," said Alan presently. "We might as well gae ashore to our work i' comfort and i' order."

David made a gangway of one of several planks that lay amidships with some shovels, a pickax, and other tools, carefully stored out of sight under a heavy tarpaulin.

"Noo, lad, the tools!"

While David slung a couple of shovels over his shoulder, his father drew forth a pickax and a blacksmith's hammer, very much like the formidable weapon that Damian, the dwarf, had wielded with much deadly effect upon the *Anne of Dartmouth*, as the reader will remember.

David was the first to step ashore. His were the only footprints to be seen, of either man, bird, or animal. Millions of insects seemed to start up and carry the news, from tiny hillock to tiny valley, of the new and strange arrival.

Shouldering his pickax and carrying the great hammer in his hand, Alan Keith followed his son. Their tall shadows climbed ahead as if to pioneer them to the little cemetery.

"Noo, lad, we'll need the trunk," said Alan, dropping his hammer and his ax.

David returned for a leather packing-case that had handles fore and aft.

Father and son carried it between them.

A flight of birds rushed, screaming, from the cavern beneath Demon's Rock as they approached it. Alan started, David uttered an exclamation of surprise. The birds disappeared among the foothills.

"When it's dark and stormy," said Alan, proceeding on his way, "that's the sort o' sma' animal the sailors mistake for demons and fiends and the like."

"I don't wonder at the superstition," said David; "the sea must set in upon this coast with awful force in winter."

"It's just wonderfu' to me that we can stand talkin' here wi' Fortune, wi' both her hands full, waitin' our pleasure," said Alan, contemplating the cairns.

"Yes, it is," David replied, half reluctant to begin, with the idea of some great disillusion awaiting his father.

"Noo, lad, lay to," said Alan, beginning to shovel the sand away from the base of the pile of stones that covered the center grave, "tak the bowlders off the top."

David inserted the pick into the interstices of the stones, and then with a shovel began to clear away the sand and weed beneath.

His heart was beating with a hopeful anticipation that all his father had led him to count upon might come true. As he worked at the unsealing of the alleged horde of gold and silver, of lace and spice and amber and precious stones, he thought of the great things Mildred might accomplish by way of fulfilling her ambition of charity and love; what he might see of the great world, sailing round it for pleasure; what Petherick would say when he called on him at Yarmouth; what he might be permitted to do to smooth the last days of Zaccheus Webb, little thinking that the old smackman had already, on that very day, solved the great mystery of all.

"Man!" exclaimed Alan, suddenly breaking in upon David's work and reflections, "what if we have been forestalled."

"What do you mean, father?" asked David, coming out of his first real unrestricted sensation of faith in the paternal promise of wealth.

"What if that man Bentz or some ither trait'rous villain has been here before us and robbed ye of your inheritance?"

"I thought no one else knew of your store?" said David,

with a sickening doubt of the whole business. "You said they were all lost at sea when you were oveborne by the might and numbers of your enemies."

"All but one," said the old man, "all but the greatest villain i' the wide world!"

"Who was he?" David asked. "What was he?"

"Just the maist damned traitor and vile thief your imagination can conceive. But we are wastin' time, laddie; it's natural to have a stray doubt come into one's mind after sae many years and when ye hae got your hand on the handle o' the door, so to speak."

"I should say these stones have not been removed since they were first stacked here," said David. "If there was ever anything of value buried beneath them, depend on it, we shall find it."

"'If!' D'ye say 'if,' David? Weel, weel, I dinna wonder ye should doubt, if I can doubt, mysel'—stand by, and gie me the pick!"

David stood aside, wiping his hot face and preparing himself generally for the disappointment he had all along feared. His father went to work with a vigor that was remarkable for his years. He bent his back over the excavation and flung out the sand in a continuous shower, sand and pebbles, sand and bits of straw and sprigs of trees that had been packed with the sand to bind it.

"Laddie, I believe ye're reight; nae sacrilegious hands hae been pottering about the cemetery o' Wilderness Creek since the *St. Dennis* sailed out o' the harbor never to return," said Alan, pausing in his work to catch his breath, and cheer up his despondent son and comrade.

"I'm glad you think so, father," David answered.

"Gie me the pick, lad," said Alan, laying down his shovel and turning up his sleeves.

Alan took the implement and, swinging it above his head, brought it down upon the spot which he and David had

partially cleared. The pick fell with a dull thud upon something that was neither sand nor rock.

"Stand by!" he said, his eyes brightening. "Stand by, David, it's a' reight, I'm thinking."

David took a step nearer to the old man, who once more brought his pick down upon the place he had struck before.

"It's there!" he exclaimed, as he drew the pick forth with a tug. "It's there! the shovel, laddie, the shovel!"

"Let me help you now," said David, handing his father the shovel.

Alan took no heed of the remark, but set to work again with unsubdued energy, only to pause when he was assured that at least the cask he had dug for was beneath his feet.

"It's the fresh air and the happiness ye hae brought me that's made me young again," he said, as if answering the point of David's admiration of his father's strength. "My lad, I amna so owd that my sinews are unstrung, my muscles dried up. Why, just noo I feel as if I were ainly beginning life, and I tell ye, I dinna mean to dee for many and many a year to come."

"Let me help you," said David once more, wondering at the same time how even his strange and eccentric father could pause to boast in the midst of the exceptional work in which he was engaged, and with a vast prize or a terrible blank within reach of his hand.

"Shovel the stuff away frae the sides o' the hole," Alan said, as he took up the pick once more, "and gie me elbow room."

David made the mouth of the excavation free from sand and stones, and Alan drove the pick once more into the obstruction that had gripped it. The result was a portion of the end of a cask. Another attack brought up a second piece, rotten and soft. Alan laid the two pieces of wood within arm's length of the hole, and then, lying prone on his side, thrust his right hand into it.

"The Frenchman's silver flagon, sure as fate!" he exclaimed, placing upon the bank a beautifully shaped jug, its golden arabesque shining out through the tarnish of the silver.

David could not speak. He stood, with parted lips, watching the unearthing of the treasure.

"Man, I ken them a'. I remember Preedie cramming the last lot o' the bright and jeweled trinkets and what not into the top of the cask. I've gotten houd o' the dagger the Frenchman said he'd looted wi' a heap o' precious things frae a palace i' the East; nay, I dinna ken where. Here it is, and by the might o' bonnie Scotland, there's the same grand light blazing on the hilt that I remember as weel as if it were yesterday."

David stooped to take the dagger, and before he had looked at it, out came a metal box, with the remark of the excavator, "Solid silver!" followed by a chafing-dish, and the remark, "Solid silver wi' goud ornaments"; then a wooden box, with seals upon it, with the remark "Amber"; to be succeeded by other packages and curios, handed out with the same lively running remarks, "A jeweled snuff-box, atta' o' roses, a little idol made o' a great pearl wi' diamonds for eyes and a sapphire headpiece. Man! I remember them as if it was yesterday; the Frenchman bragged o' them as he got fuddled wi' his red wine, which me and my crew could just drink like watter and never wink!"

David shook himself to be sure that he was David; that he was not in bed at Yarmouth; and then he felt inclined to shout, "Father, forgive me! I thought you were mad!"

"What d'ye think about it, now?" Alan asked, looking up, his eyes ablaze, his face streaming with perspiration, his mouth wreathed with smiles.

"I cannot think," said David. "I want to dance as you thought you would."

"Then dance, lad! by the Lord, I'll set ye the tune," he said. "Here it is!" And he handed David a small bag. "Press it to your heart, David, and dance like your great namesake, wha danced before the Laird; for ye hae got a treasure now that Mildred can build her hospital wi', and set up a' her needy poor i' business from Caister to Gorleston, and ye can build the church we promised Father Lavello, in the midst o' Heart's Content; and puir owd Alan Keith can raise a monument i' the forest to God's angel upon earth."

As he said these things he rose to his feet, and David seized him by the hand.

"Father!" he exclaimed, "I never thought it was quite true—not that I doubted your word, but it passed beyond all my hopes, and now I don't know how to contain myself."

"I'll sit me doon," said Alan, "not here, I'll gae aboord, I'm feelin' a trifle tired, and a wee bit thoughtfu'. Eh, man, I only wish the comrades who stood here i' the past, and who helped store these things were here to tak their share and divide wi' me. Nay, nay; on second thoughts I dinna wish anything o' the kind, except perhaps in the case o' Preedie and Donald Nicol—the others wad just ha' misapplied it. David, I dinna ken quite what I'm sayin'. I'll gae aboord and hae anither wee drop to steady mysel'."

"But this bag, father?" said David, still holding the small leather bag that his father had placed in his hands with so many exclamations as to its value. It was a soft thick leather bag, drawn together with thongs of leather. It had once been sealed, but the wax was broken, and the thongs had been clumsily retied.

"Preedie understood a' aboot preecious stones and the like. I couldna tell them frae glass for my pairt, but Preedie just loved to sit doon and finger these i' the bag—finger them and gloat ower them—and he said they were worth a king's ransom; pearls, diamonds, sapphires, and rubies; one of the biggest diamonds was to be recut, he said; and he talked

o' Amsterdam, and dealers in stones, and cutters and the like, that wise I often wondered if he'd been i' the trade. Open the bag, David!"

David untied the thongs, and emptied a few of the stones into the palm of his hand.

"Not changed one bit," said Alan; "the same wonderfu' sky blue, the same blude red, the same glassy white wi' ten thousand sparks in 'em—weel, David, what d'ye mak on 'em?"

"I should say they are all Mr. Preedie thought them. They are wonderful!"

"A king's ransom, he said they were worth. But gin there be ony mistake, why there's a barrel o' English guineas and braw new shillin's, and Spanish coins that'll mak amends!"

Alan went on board the smack. David watched him until he disappeared below. It was a small cabin; but there were two bunks in it, and the old man had evidently decided to lie down. David now began to think that Wilderness Creek might not be quite the secret place his father imagined. He suddenly felt the responsibility of wealth, and looked about him to be sure that he was not under the surveillance of some desperado. He thought of the description of the coast the captain of the *Morning Star* had given him, and felt if his pistol was safe in his belt. Then he laid his jacket over the treasures that were lying on the ground, and putting the bag of precious stones beneath it, shoveled more of the sand from the mouth of the buried cask and cautiously dropped into it, stooping down and proceeding with the work of emptying it. He hauled out all kind of packages, cups, ornaments, chalices, packets of lace, flasks bound in woven reeds and sealed with seals, and at last concluded that it would be wise to fill the leather trunk his father had brought to carry the treasures on board.

After awhile, looking toward the smack, he saw his father sitting calmly amidships smoking his chibouk. He waved his hand to the old man, who responded by raising his pipe and saluting with it, as if it were a sword. Then David began to pack the trunk. He laid the dagger, and all the boxes that were flat, in the bottom : the quaint packages of laces, the well wrapped amber, the cups and chalices, the curious ornaments, a pair of jeweled belts, heavy with gold and thick with rose diamonds, that did not sparkle much but had a very grand and regal appearance. In a corner, between soft packages and reed-wrapped flasks of perfumes and strange spices, he placed the bag of stones. To keep the whole fairly firm he filled the remainder of the trunk with sand and dry weeds and *débris* of Old Time, of storm, and stress, and heat, and cold, and proceeded to drag the treasure to the smack.

"When ye hae got your treasure," said Alan, at night, as they sat in the little cabin after supper, "then comes the anxiety o' guardin' it. Considerin' that there is some kind o' law aboot treasure trove, we hae got to be careful and discreet. It is true Preedie bought most o' the land hereaboots ; it is true he has endowed ye wi' the same. I amna quite sure that his precautions bar what are ca'd the reights o' the crown ; not that I have asked our friend Lawyer Margrave or anyone the question ; but ye will see the wisdom, I am sure, o' the wee bit furnace, in which we can melt down such coins and such silver as we may deem best to keep in ingots, so to speak."

"I don't question your judgment in anything," said David, "and I think you as wonderful as you are good. To have maintained your sanity and your purpose, through such sufferings and sorrows as have fallen to your lot, is miraculous !"

"Aye, 'tis in a way, David ; but I began wi' an enormous constitution. My father and grandfather, and every

Keith I ever heard on, were mighty folk, soldiers and sailors, fightin' men wi' tough sinews and big bones."

"And big hearts!" said David.

"Ye may say that!" Alan replied. "And yet I left my ain father promising to go hame, and I didna gae hame, and he deed and was buried wi'oot a hand o' mine to help lay him to rest; but he'd ha' forgiven me, if he had seen your mother, David. But there, we maunna waste time talking o' the past sae far away. We'll sail out the morn wi' our cargo, and tak it to St. John's. There's a cellar i' the house that'll keep the chest, safe enough; and we can negotiate some o' the stones and things through your trustee, Mr. Margrave, who seems to be baith shrewd and reliable. I induced him to remain at St. John's sae lang as I might want him; and I made him tak a fee that was not out o' proportion wi' any reasonable service I might require."

"It's a pity we could not trust anyone to help us," said David, "I'm fearful of leaving the place."

"Ye needna be," Alan replied. "Depend upon it, i' a' these years Wilderness Creek is just the lonely, unvisited spot I found it when I was an adventurous young fellow, and i' love wi' your dear mother, who wad often say she feared I didna quite ken hoo dreadfu' the coast was hereaboot."

"You think it is best to sail home with this first portion of our cargo?"

"That's my opinion," said Alan. "Dinna put a' your eggs i' one basket is a gude proverb, though I had to disregard it when I was clearin' to defend the rebel flag as they ca'd it; though it's a grand flag enough noo in general estimation. Besides, laddie, we named a day to return, and dinna ye think Mildred will be anxious aboot ye?"

"Of course, of course!" said David, whose thoughts were not altogether apart from Mildred while they were

bent upon the treasures that were to be so great a boon to her as well as to himself.

"My idea is just to tak this first cargo clean hame, the contents o' the one cask, and to mak two other trips—perhaps three. I hae thought it a' oot, David; mair than ye hae, laddie, for the reason that ye haena quite realized what we hae been aboot until ye stood face to face wi' the reality o' the romance I hae been telling ye aboot a' this time. Dinna fash yoursel', lad, we'll land the treasure, and convert it, nivver fear!"

"I hope so," said David.

"I am sure so!" was Alan's quick reply. "To-morrow before we set sail, we'll land our furnace and set it up. It's sma', but it'll do a' we require; and ye shall blow the bellows, David, to the finest music ye hae heard for many a year, lad; and, wi' all due reverence, we'll just worship at the altar that all the world worships at. But we'll melt our golden images to build hospitals wi' and mak folks happy—oursel's amang the rest, David—we arena gaeing to forget oursel's."

Night came down dark and silent, with here and there a star; and, notwithstanding his anxieties, David slept so soundly that the sun had risen, and his father was up and preparing breakfast, before he awoke.

"Another glorious day," said Alan, as David rubbed his eyes and sat up in his bunk, "and yesterday is true; we are unearthing the treasure, ye hae come into your fortune. Noo, lad, up ye get, and tak a swim i' the watters o' Wilderness Creek, where ye are monarch of all ye survey—and mair—and much mair, David, my son—and God bless ye, lad!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

DAVID'S WIFE.

After frowning upon him, and pursuing him with misadventure even unto the very Valley of the Shadow of Death, Fortune smiled upon David Keith, and endowed him with happiness without a drawback, beyond the common discounts that belong to the natural state of man. She had not altogether shielded him from the penalties of his hereditary passion of vengeance; but she had brought him through the perils thereof with a far less and much briefer punishment than that which had fallen to the lot of his father.

Moreover, David's good fortune in this respect was further secured, and guarantees given to Fate by his marriage with a woman who had the power and the opportunity to influence him in the direction of the most perfect charity.

Mildred Hope also had her reward of a silent and self-sacrificing love in the realization of her most sanguine hopes. She had never dared to pray for such bliss as had been vouchsafed her. The reader knows that her views of prayer were not in the direction of petitions for material blessings. They were rather the register of her own ambition to do good deeds, and to be worthy of heavenly recognition, than supplications for this and that, and blessings upon her worldly enterprises. Hoping all things good, desiring power for the sake of others, she had inherited her unspoken desires, and saw her way to be God's almoner.

It had been a quiet wedding, at the church where Mildred as a girl had received her first impulse of religious

faith and active charity. She was a very beaming bride, despite that touch of seriousness in her manner and attire that had appealed to the worldly mind of Mrs. Charity Dene as not incompatible with love. Sally Mumford confessed that she had no idea how pretty Mildred really was until she saw her dressed for the wedding that made Sally not less happy than the bride herself. David had recovered his strength, and his eye was almost as bright as his father's; his lips continually parting to laugh or say something expressive of his joy. He had come to love Mildred with a full heart, and to feel in it that sense of rest, security, and serene happiness that could not for a single day have gone hand in hand in a union with Elmira Webb. Alan Keith was at the wedding, erect, clean shaven, bony, and wrinkled as ever, but with the deep-set eyes, prominent nose, and broad wrinkled forehead that characterized his first appearance in Hartley's Row. Instead of the rough flannel collar that usually fell about his throat, tied around with a silk scarf of some odd color, Sally Mumford had induced him to put on a white linen shirt and a light blue stock with a gold pin in it. Nothing would induce him, however, to change his gaberdinish coat and his curious vest, but the buckles in his shoes had been polished, and they were nearly as white as Mildred Hope's teeth, which flashed now and then between her red lips. Sally was dressed in a gray silk gown with a pretty old-fashioned pelisse, and her gray hair was gathered in clusters of curls on each temple. Mr. Petherick gave the bride away, and Mr. Margrave, the trustee under Plympton's will, was one of the witnesses. Margrave had waited at St. John's until the news of the loss of the *Morning Star* had left him nothing else to do but return home; and now after the wedding Mr. Alan Keith had been able to give him such a fee, with contingent promise of another, as induced him to accompany the party on the wedding tour. The trip was to St.

John's, this time from the London docks and by steam. The voyage had been delightful, and they had reached St. John's with the first warm sunbeams of an early summer.

They had rented a furnished house belonging to one of the principal residents, who had been tempted to take a holiday in Europe on the strength of Mr. Margrave's proposals for the house, which the astute London lawyer had made through the agent with whom he had long been in communication in regard to David Plympton's bequests. These testamentary gifts were chiefly in favor of David Keith, the property including certain wild and waste territory along the coast of Labrador, and extending for some distance inland above Demon's Rock. Soon after the party landed, therefore, Mildred found herself mistress of what was considered a very fine house for St. John's, with her father-in-law, Alan Keith, Sally Mumford, and Mr. Margrave as visitors. She proved quite equal in every way to her new duties, and Sally never tired of praising her, and congratulating David on his clever and pretty wife. The only anxious times the two women experienced were during the weeks when David and Alan were away on their excursions to Wilderness Creek. There was no real cause for anxiety, and their fears were brief ; they only belonged to the hours or days when the voyagers did not return very close to the times appointed ; but David and Alan could not count upon the moment they might sail through the natural gateway of St. John's, with their mysterious cargoes. Everything had been favorable to the Labrador treasure collectors. Mr. Margrave proved himself a valuable ally in the disposal of the valuables. He made a journey to New York with bullion and precious stones, and paid a very large sum to David Keith's account through New York into the Bank of England, besides making deposits in David's name for which he brought back scrip in three of the leading banks of the United States.

The deposit which Alan made in the friendly oasis above Demon's Rock, he paid without fear or reservation into the Bank of St. John's. Whatever he might feel as to certain of the treasures of Wilderness Creek, at least the horde he had buried away in a secret corner only known to himself, was without taint. It consisted of the fund made over to him by his father-in-law, and in part of his own hard-earned savings, when it had been settled that he and Preedie should go to Salem or Boston and buy a ship to fight against the buccaneering Ristack. The bank manager was only too glad to welcome to St. John's the heirs of David Plympton, father and son, and Alan announced his own and his son's intention of promoting enterprises, both commercial and charitable, bearing upon the welfare of the colony. The bright-eyed old man even spoke of a railroad from St. John's to the two nearest neighboring settlements, and made various other wild suggestions that were quite in keeping with his strange foreign appearance. The first contract upon which he entered was preliminary to the erection of the fine memorials which now mark the locality of the last resting places, firstly, of Hannah Keith; and, secondly, of the Newfoundland dog, Sampson. The broken column, with its guardian angel, that marks the grave of the belle of the vanished Heart's Delight, and the monolith, with its sculptured head of a dog, that stands in the shadow of a group of tamaracks and other forest trees, are features of Back Bay Valley sacred to memories that already belong to tradition and romance.

The new Heart's Content interested Alan Keith only in a negative way. It did not even suggest the village of Heart's Delight, upon the ashes of which it was built. There was no trace of the Great House. The fish flakes were all new. The stakes, up against which the well-dressed bodies of Ristack and Ruddock had floated, grim tributes to the rough justice of a great revenge, had disap-

peared. The houses were mostly of brick and stone. The quay was a firm and solid piece of workmanship. There were gardens, but the arbor of the Great House had been burnt up in the general conflagration and clearing which had been undertaken under the authority of the Great Seal of England. All was changed, indeed. The inhabitants had little or no record of the past. The people whom Alan had known were mostly dispersed. Even to this day Heart's Content has little or no record of the village upon the ashes of which it was built. The oldest inhabitant had his stories of the days of the fishing admirals and of the war with America, but he was garrulous, often forgot names and dates, and so varied his stories that they had come to be regarded as fables. The grave in Back Bay Valley, and the legend of the dog, cut into the tamarack, had held their place in such romance as the district provided, and the valley had become a picnic ground, once in a way during autumn days when the fishing was over, for family parties, and the school, which was the principal institution of the new town. Alan had felt a deep sense of gratitude to Heart's Content on this account, and he gave practical expression to it in establishing the foundation of the schools and church beyond the possibility of future want.

If Heart's Content disappointed Alan by its absence of familiar landmarks, it was, nevertheless, the kind of fishing village and harbor that he and Plympton had thought of as possible at some future day. Plympton, as we all know, was far less sanguine than Alan, who was imbued with a prophetic sense of the destiny of the oldest British colony. Ungrateful stepmother as the old country undoubtedly was, Alan, with the keen-sighted prevision of a shrewd and enterprising Scotchman, gauged the destiny of a territory that was bound to pass through the darkness in which he found it into the light of commercial prosperity, if not

imperial distinction. Alan's hopes and prophecies have been fulfilled, but the height to which his forecast pointed discloses other heights which have to be climbed in the confirmation of Newfoundland's rights and privileges, and in fulfillment of the duty the mother country still owes to her oldest and nearest colony.

In their operations at Wilderness Creek, David and Alan had concluded that it would be well to concentrate their attention upon the cemetery, and leave the upper regions of the territory for their concluding labors. Not a soul appeared in the region of Nasquappe to disturb them. A couple of eagles evidently had their home on a distant cliff seaward. They would sail now and then in a wide circle over the harbor and disappear behind the lower ranges of the hills; at night mysterious wings would swish by them as they carried their last loads to the smack—bats or owls, or both; but no human voice was heard, no human footprint, except their own, marked the sandy shore.

At sea, beyond the shelter of Wilderness Creek and far away from the dreaded rocks and shoals, fishing ships rode at anchor or trailed their nets; otherwise the two men were as much alone and safe from interruption as the men of the *St. Dennis* had been with their added protection of look-outs and sentinels. The light of the furnace which had, during the favorable and lovely summer, converted thousands of Spanish and English dollars and guineas into solid ingots, and had obliterated the identity of many an antique vessel, cast a lurid light upon the foothills of the entrance to the cavern, and startled such winged life as had been hitherto unaccustomed to any of the disturbing evidences of man's ingenuity. David and Alan labored away with steady persistence. They had soon become accustomed to their wealth. David had long ceased to utter exclamations over every new find; but at night, on board the smack before turning in, father and son had built all kinds

of castles in the air—castles that even their cargo's treasures were not sufficient to encompass ; and now and then David would draw from his father fresh details of his adventures, and the father from David hitherto unrelated incidents of his first voyage and wreck. Narratives of his early days in Venice would crop up in all Alan's stories ; they came as his chief relief to the horrors of his slavery and imprisonment. Then he would go back to Heart's Delight, and picture to David the winter nights with his grandfather and his mother and Father Lavello in the family circle. Considering the changes that had taken place in the colony, the settled peace at home, the countries covered in his father's record, his own boyhood, and the remote times that Sally Mumford had spoken of, the similes connected with the "Wandering Jew," which Alan used now and then, seemed quite appropriate, and David found himself searching his memory for other parallels to his father's strange and long career. Alan told his son that, when he reached his age, he would find that looking back over half a century was no more than the yesterday of youthful retrospection. What made the time appear a little longer than time was to persons who remained in one spot all their lives, were the many landmarks of varied events in different places ; but even these at the last came very close together, and life after all was just no more and no less than Job described it, "We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow."

CHAPTER XLIX.

A HAPPY FAMILY.

When the *Nautilus* had made her last voyage, and Alan and David had shoveled back the sand and re-erected the stones above the emptied treasure casks, Alan proposed that they should charter a vessel of more importance, and fitted for comfort, to make a pleasant coasting trip to Wilderness Creek, carrying sailors and carpenters, and certain passengers, with a view to a few weeks' sojourn at the Berry Garden, as he called the green spot above Demon's Rock. David fell in with the idea, and in the waning days of summer they set about carrying it out. First the treasure had to be secured, and as far as possible invested. This was done with the aid of Mr. Margrave, and such remainder as the Keiths desired to keep intact was packed, some of it in strong boxes and deposited in the bank, other stores being built into the cellars of the house they had rented, and which during their absence were placed in charge of the police, now properly organized and a responsible body, altogether different from the unofficial constabulary that did volunteer service when Alan Keith first knew the capital of the colony. David Plympton, besides his territorial rights to certain tracts of lands at Heart's Content, had left certain properties both at Halifax and St. John's, and when Alan and his party sailed on their cruise for Labrador, it was made known in a general way that they were going to survey the lands that Plympton had purchased shortly before his death. Mysterious hints were thrown out that valuable minerals had been discovered there, accounting for Plympton's investment, which, to all

that had been made acquainted with it, was regarded as nothing short of a mad waste of money.

There was a handsome vessel lying at St. John's which exactly fitted Alan's requirements. He chartered it for the trip with its captain and crew. To these he added several local carpenters and a builder. By way of cargo they took in an ample store of provisions, with a few articles of furniture, a store of bedding and cushions, and other necessaries for an encampment. The passengers were Alan Keith, Mr. and Mrs. David Keith, and Sally Mumford. The London lawyer could not spare the time for holiday-making. He had many details of business to complete in connection with the Keith fortunes, and, moreover, he felt that it was best for him to remain at the beck and call of the local bankers and solicitors, who found themselves unusually busy with investments, transfers of stocks, shipments of bullion, and so on, not to mention the clearing up of the bequests of the late David Plympton.

When the St. John's captain found himself off the point where Alan desired him to shape his course for Wilderness Creek, the experienced old sailor flatly refused to give the necessary orders. He was not going to risk his ship, let alone the lives she carried, on the word of any man. He had his sailing chart. He knew the coast. Alan Keith had his chart also, and he knew the coast far better, he claimed, than the St. John's captain. Alan's chart was an example of a most complete survey, with every rock and channel clearly marked, not to mention soundings and points of observation that went into almost unnecessary details. The captain examined the nautical map with interest and curiosity. He admitted that there were harbors none the less safe because they were comparatively unknown; others that as yet had no places in recognized charts; he did not deny that there had been instances of ships being literally blown into sheltering waters where they only expected

destruction, and from the very rocks that had eventually proved their chief protection; indeed, he challenged none of Alan's statements except that of a clean, safe channel lying inside the jagged rocks at the very point upon which Alan desired him to steer. After a time the captain found himself leaning his back upon an argument that Alan soon found means of practically combating. The St. John's man said his crew would mutiny if he headed the ship for what must to them seem certain destruction, even in the finest weather; one touch of such teeth as those that showed black and sharp in the blue would be enough to cut a hole in the stoutest ship, or hold her tight and fast until she broke up. Finally, however, this last objection was overcome by the lowering of a boat, and David and Alan taking the oars, and having with them the mate and one of the oldest hands among the crew. The sea was like a mill-pond, except where it climbed about the rocks that seemed to snap and bite at the waves in the mouth of the channel. Alan proposed to steer. Two hours were occupied with this experimental trip. The mate's report, backed by the enthusiastic indorsement of the old sailor, was so emphatic in Alan's favor that the ship was headed for the creek; and with a summer breeze from the sea, not more than enough to carry her behind the rocks and into deep water, the St. John's captain ran his vessel into the lovely harbor, amid exclamations of surprise, and such expressions of wonder as one might have imagined bursting from the pioneer crews of Columbus and Cabot in presence of some of their earliest discoveries.

Before sundown the cargo was unloaded, and portions of it dragged through the cave and hauled upon the table-land above the rock. Early the next morning the carpenters began to transform the ruined huts and sheds of the dead and gone crew of the *St. Dennis* into habitable shelters. Within thirty-six hours the little settlement was

complete. The sailors and workmen remained on board ship. Alan and the rest, with a couple of servants, took up their quarters in and around the Berry Garden. Mr. and Mrs. David Keith were quite luxuriously accommodated. Sally Mumford was installed head housekeeper, and she and her maids had a little wooden house all to themselves. Alan had his hammock slung in a cabin at the western corner of the garden, dominating the valley, and also having a broad view of the sea and bits of the rocky coast. The perfume of land flowers all the time mingled with the smell of ocean weed that came up with whiffs of pungent ozone. The plants, which would bear their various fruits in the autumn, were in full bloom in the Berry Garden. Swallows, that had built their nests on the face of Demon's Rock, filled the sunny air with their brisk cries. In the early mornings singing birds, with fewer notes, but gayer feathers than the songsters of England, made their humble music in the grove of larch and spruce and birch that dipped down into the valley beyond. Butterflies winged their lazy flight from flower to flower and from bush to bush. The drowsy hum of bees mingled with the tiny plaints and curious signalings of still smaller things. Nature was just as busy in every direction as if all the civilized world had been looking on. It is wonderful to think what myriads of communities of beings, perfect of their kind, endowed with beauties beyond all the arts of man, are living within the laws of nature and by the Divine fiat in every part of the globe, utterly irrespective of human knowledge and beyond all human ken. In this vast animal kingdom, philosophers tell us, the fittest survive the universal conflict for existence. It must be a study of vast importance and interest to consider the survival of the fittest in families and nations. Whether they be "the fittest," or otherwise, the survivors of the wrack and blight of a hard world who claim the reader's undivided attention, at the conclusion of these faith-

ful records, are notable examples of mixed fortunes, which they have borne according to their lights and natural impulses. It has come to the hour when we have to say good-by to them. It is always more or less sad to say good-by. In this case one has the consolation of taking leave when the glass of good fortune is at "set fair" in the lives of the men and women whom we love. I hope I may say "we" in this connection, for then I shall not be alone in my reluctance to turn away from the Berry Garden of Labrador on this closing picture of a happy holiday.

They are sitting in the doorway of Alan Keith's log cabin, the four persons who bring this history to an end. It is evening. The sun has gone down. The sea is beginning to reflect a few stars and the image of the young moon. Alan Keith is smoking his long pipe. Sally Mumford is coaxing from her knitting needles the consolation of a more feminine habit. Alan does not taste the tobacco. Sally only hears the chatter of her needles. They are both thinking of the past, while finding their happiness in the present; for David is their happiness, David and the sweet wife who is worthy to be named while they are thinking of his mother. Mildred and David have arisen from their low seats, to watch the last beams of the sun give way to the silvery light of the crescent moon, which now looks like a brooch on the bosom of the sea. They are all touched by the beauty of the scene, and there is just the merest suggestion of a pang in the cry of the plover that comes up from the valley. They have already heard its warning cry. They know the summer is over. Thoughts unbidden, and reflections that come of themselves, belong to moments such as these. David finds himself hoping that when the last change of all comes to his father and the faithful woman who sits with her knitting on her knee and her thoughts far away, it will be like the summer that gradually fades into autumn, and goes out with a gentle sigh

that you do not know for one or the other, summer or autumn.

Presently there rises up in the Berry Garden a figure that looks like an antique warrior, the victorious counterpart of that torn and bleeding waif of the sea who gathered himself up from the jagged rocks of the cruel Bahamas and faced the lances of the morning sun.

"Many a time I've stood and looked across the waters and seen visions," said Alan. "Some have come true, some hae mocked me i' the storm. I wonder what ye may see, David, my son, as ye look out now wi' your wife by your side and God's immortal stars above ye, and that wonderfu' wee bit moon down yonder, sae clear and bright that the sea might be the heavens, and the heavens the sea?"

Alan put his arm about David's shoulders as he spoke, and David drew Mildred still closer to his side.

"May I answer for David?" the young and happy wife asked, leaning her head against David's strong arm.

"Aye, my lassie, what do you see wi' your gentle spiritual eyes?"

"I see a great hospital with soft-voiced nurses flitting from bed to bed; I see gentle almoners visiting the fatherless and the widow; I see orphan waifs of the street gathered into clean and homely shelters, and fed, and taught to read and pray; I hear the voices of a happy choir singing in a new church at Heart's Content; I see ships of God going out into the dark waters to take comfort for soul and body to the fishermen of the North Sea and their brethren of Newfoundland; I see unsuspected misery discovered by sympathetic search and restored to health and work; I see a sad world made brighter, and I hear thousands blessing the name of Alan Keith."

"My child," said the old man, "if this may be so it shall stand as an everlasting assurance of the unbounded mercy of God to a wicked but penitent sinner."

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